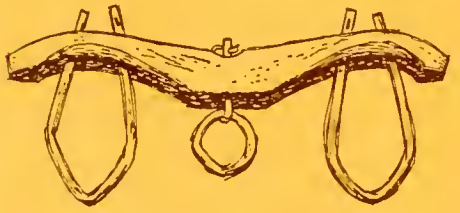

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Abraham Lincoln in 1863*

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

BY CARL SCHURZ

WITH AN ESSAY ON

THE PORTRAITS OF LINCOLN

BY TRUMAN H. BARTLETT

ILLUSTRATED


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# NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

# NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1863 *Frontispiece*

This photograph was made by Brady on the Sunday before the Gettysburg speech, delivered November 19, 1863. The following account of the circumstances attending it is taken from an article by Noah Brooks in "Scribner's Magazine" for February, 1878:—

"One Saturday night, the President asked me if I had any objection to accompanying him to a photographer's on Sunday. He said that it was impossible for him to go on any other day, and he would like to have me see him 'set.' Next day we went together, and as he was leaving the house he stopped and said, 'Hold on, I have forgotten Everett!' Stepping hastily back, he brought with him a folded paper, which he explained was a printed copy of the oration that Mr. Everett was to deliver, in a few days, at Gettysburg. It occupied nearly the whole of two pages of the 'Boston Journal,' and looked very formidable indeed. As we walked away from the house, Lincoln said, 'It was very kind in Mr. Everett to send me this. I suppose he was afraid I should say something that he wanted to say. He need n't have been alarmed. My speech is n't long.' 'So it is written, is it, then?' I asked. 'Well, no,' was the reply. 'It is not exactly written. It is not finished, anyway. I have written it over, two or three times, and I shall have to give it another lick before I am satisfied. But it is short, short, short.' I found, afterward, that the Gettysburg speech was actually written, and rewritten a great many times. The several draughts and interlineations of that famous address, if in existence, would be an invaluable memento of its great author. Lincoln took the copy of Everett's oration with him to the photographer's, thinking that he might have time to look it over while waiting for the operator. But he chatted so constantly, and asked so many questions about the art of

photography, that he scarcely opened it. The folded paper is seen lying on the table, near the President, in the picture which was made that day."

THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, FULL-FACE VIEW FROM THE PLASTER *Page* 3

This life-mask of Lincoln was made by Leonard W. Volk in April, 1860, just before Lincoln's nomination for the presidency. A few replicas of the mask in plaster were early made, and it has also been cast in bronze, — in Paris, in 1877, under the direction of Mr. Truman H. Bartlett, and in New York, a few years later, as the result of a subscription taken for this purpose. An important account of the making of the mask, written by the sculptor himself, will be found in the "Century Magazine" for December, 1881.

THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THREE-QUARTERS VIEW FROM THE PLASTER *Page* 12

RIGHT PROFILE OF THE MASK IN BRONZE *Page* 18

LEFT PROFILE OF THE MASK IN BRONZE *Page* 22

PROFILES OF LINCOLN AND WASHINGTON *Page* 26

The life-mask of Lincoln by Leonard W. Volk and that of Washington by the French sculptor Houdon are considered the two most important contributions yet made to American plastic portraiture. The profile of Washington is taken from Houdon's bust, the face of which was practically a replica of the life-mask.

THE HANDS OF LINCOLN *Page* 30

The casts of the hands of Lincoln were made by Leonard W. Volk in June, 1860, just after Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency. Replicas in plaster and bronze are not uncommon.

THE HAND OF LINCOLN *Page* 41

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1859 *Page* 50

From an original photograph owned by William Lloyd Garrison of Lexington, Mass. This photograph was made by A. W. Fassett of Chicago in October, 1859, and the negative was lost in the great Chicago fire in 1871.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1861 *Page* 64

From a rare photograph by an unknown photographer, copyrighted in 1861 by D. Appleton & Company. From a copy in the possession of Francis J. Garrison of Lexington, Mass.

LINCOLN WITH HIS GENERALS AT ANTIETAM *Page* 70

From a photograph taken by Alexander Gardner for Brady just after the battle of Antietam on the 3d of October, 1862. The original negative is now in the possession of the War Department at Washington.

LINCOLN AND GENERAL McCLELLAN *Page* 82

From a photograph by Gardner taken at the same time as the foregoing. The original negative is in the possession of the War Department at Washington.

LINCOLN STANDING ALONE *Page* 88

This is an enlargement of Lincoln's figure in a photograph by Brady of a group composed of Lincoln, Gen. J. A. McClernand, and Pinkerton the army detective.

RIGHT AND LEFT PROFILES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN *Page* 94

The profile of the right side of Lincoln's face is from a photograph made by Brady in 1864. That of the left side was made by Brady on November 8, 1863.

LINCOLN AND HIS SECRETARIES, JOHN HAY AND JOHN G. NICOLAY *Page* 102

From a photograph by Brady taken at the same time as the left profile, November 8, 1863.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1864 *Page* 110

From an un-retouched negative made March 9, 1864, by Rice. This negative, with one of General Grant, was made in commemoration of the appointment of Grant as Lieutenant-General and Commander of all the armies of the Republic.

LINCOLN AND HIS SON "TAD" *Page* 122

From a photograph of uncertain date, by Brady.

LINCOLN IN 1865 *Page* 128

From the photograph by H. F. Warren of Waltham, Mass., taken March 6, 1865. The following interesting account of

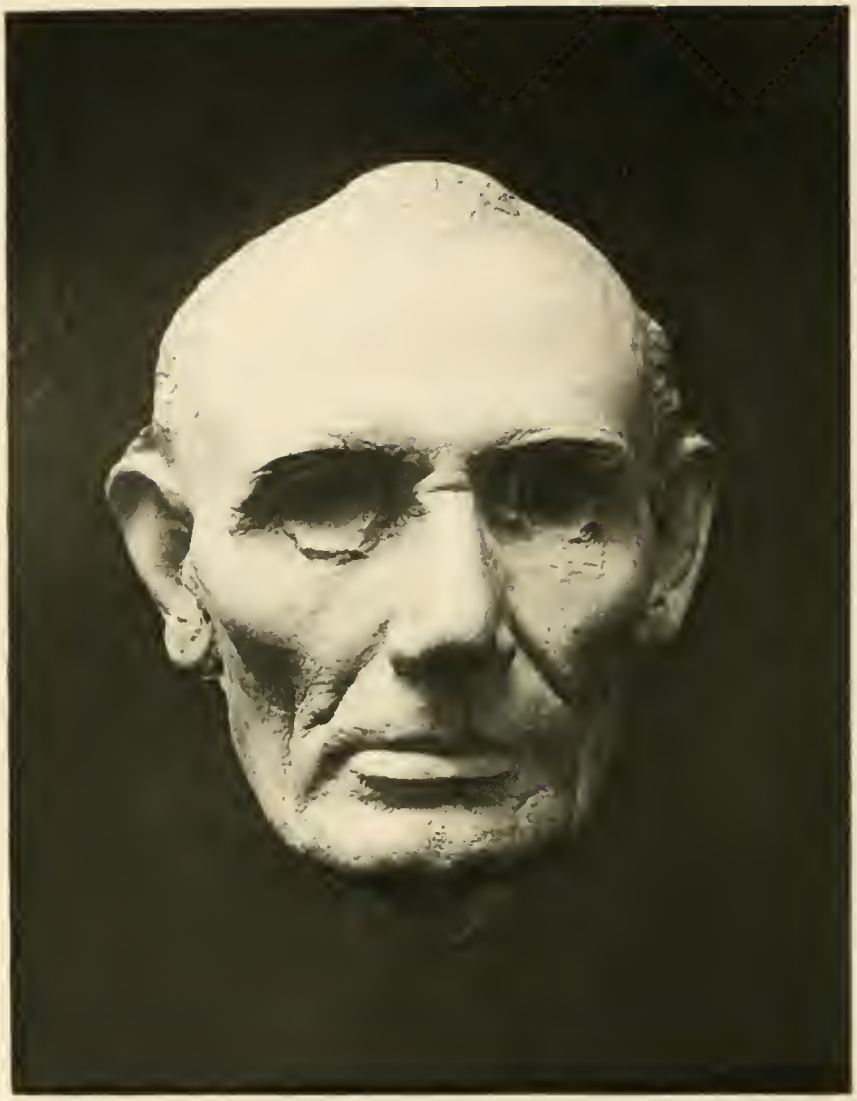
this late and important picture of Lincoln was communicated to the "Century Magazine" for October, 1882, by Mr. Alexander Starbuck of Waltham, Mass.: —

"About the last of February, 1865, Mr. H. F. Warren, a photographer of Waltham, Mass., left home, intending, if practicable, to visit the army in front of Richmond and Petersburg. Arriving in Washington on the morning of the 4th of March, and finding it necessary to procure passes to carry out the end he had in view, he concluded to remain there until the inauguration ceremonies were over, and, having carried with him all the apparatus necessary for taking negatives, he decided to try to secure a sitting from the President. At that time rumors of plots and dangers had caused the friends of President Lincoln to urge upon him the necessity of a guard, and, as he had finally permitted the presence of such a body, an audience with him was somewhat difficult. On the afternoon of the 6th of March, Mr. Warren sought a presentation to Mr. Lincoln, but found, after consulting with the guard, that an interview could be had on that day in only a somewhat irregular manner. After some conversation with the officer in charge, who became convinced of his loyalty, Mr. Warren was admitted within the lines, and, at the same time, was given to understand that the surest way to obtain an audience with the President was through the intercession of his little son 'Tad.' The latter was a great pet with the soldiers, and was constantly at their barracks, and soon made his appearance, mounted upon his pony. He and the pony were soon placed in position and photographed, after which Mr. Warren asked 'Tad' to tell his father that a man had come all the way from Boston, and was particularly anxious to see him and obtain a sitting from him. 'Tad' went to see his father, and word was soon returned that Mr. Lincoln would comply. In the mean time Mr. Warren had improvised a kind of studio upon the south balcony of the White House. Mr. Lincoln soon came out, and, saying but a very few words, took his seat as indicated. After a single negative was taken, he inquired, 'Is that all, sir?' Unwilling to detain him longer than was absolutely necessary, Mr. Warren

replied, 'Yes, sir,' and the President immediately withdrew. At the time he appeared upon the balcony the wind was blowing freshly, as his disarranged hair indicates, and, as sunset was rapidly approaching, it was difficult to obtain a sharp picture. Six weeks later President Lincoln was dead, and it is doubtless true that this is the last photograph ever made of him."

There is a good deal of evidence to point to the belief that the so-called "last" photograph of Lincoln by Gardner, for which the date of April 9, 1865, is given, was actually taken somewhat earlier than this by Warren.

# ON THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN



*The Life Mask of Abraham Lincoln*
*Full face view from the plaster*

## ON THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

This bronze doth keep the very form and mould
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that hold
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea
For storms to beat on; the lone agony
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men
As might some prophet of the elder day —
Brooding above the tempest and the fray
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.
A power was his beyond the touch of art
Or armèd strength — his pure and mighty heart.

Richard Watson Gilder.

# THE PORTRAITS OF LINCOLN

# THE PORTRAITS OF LINCOLN

IT is the popular belief, the world over, that Abraham Lincoln was in face and figure, in action or repose, an ugly man. It is doubtful if any human being known to history has been the subject of such complete and reiterated description, by high and low, friend and enemy; and the vocabulary employed to describe him includes about every word in common use in the English language, the meaning of which is opposed to anything admirable, elegant, beautiful, or refined. The words used to set forth the physical appearance of this personage, now rated by imposing fame as one of the Great of the Earth, gather when assembled a new and affecting interest.

From the time Abraham Lincoln was fourteen years of age, then more than six feet high and weighing about one hundred and sixty pounds, until he was nominated for the Presidency, he was locally known by the following pleasing char-

acterizations: "angular," "ungainly," "clumsy," "gaunt;" "awkward," "thin," "leggy," "gawky;" "gigantic," "solemn visaged," "beardless clodhopper;" "uncouth," "half-clad boor, whose heavy features were flabby, lifeless, and deeply furrowed;" "a homely, lank, long, dried-up, bony-armed man, with leathery face, shrivelled and yellow;" "long-limbed, brawny-handed, queer-looking old fellow, with prominent features, dull and expressionless;" "rough-looking backwoodsman with a wiry, raw-boned, tall frame and ganglion legs." His clothes and his unconventional movements and manners have received a similar unflattering description.

During Lincoln's stumping tours near home or in the neighboring states, his personal appearance received its accustomed attention. In Michigan, in 1856, talking for Fremont, he was known as the "Long Sucker of Illinois;" in Ohio, the "Giant of the Sangamon Bottoms;" and farther west, the "Illinois Rail Splitter," and other suggestive names. Lincoln himself was not impressed with his own beauty, and often referred, throughout his life, to his physical plainness, though claiming that inside he was as much of a gentleman as any one; and even Mrs. Lincoln called him an "ungainly" husband.

Joseph Medill, editor of the Chicago "Tribune,"

who was with Lincoln occasionally during the Douglas debates, says that it was a standing joke of his that there was one "homelier" man in Illinois than himself, and that was his friend Archie Williams of Quincy, who, he said, had carried the ugly man's jack-knife for twenty years without meeting a successful competitor for it, and he reckoned Archie would carry it as long as he lived, though when he died it would descend to himself. But Lincoln got his jack-knife before death got Archie. "I was accosted on the cars," so he told the story, "by a stranger, who said, 'Excuse me, sir, I have an article in my possession which belongs to you.' 'How is that?' I asked, considerably astonished. The stranger took a jack-knife from his pocket. 'This knife,' he said, 'was placed in my hands some years ago, with the injunction that I was to keep it until I found a man uglier than myself. I have to say, sir, that I think you are fairly entitled to the property.'"

Only once in his life, perhaps, did Lincoln become painfully conscious of the miserable appearance of his clothes, and that was when he came to New York in 1860 to make his Cooper Institute speech. He brought with him a new suit of black and wore it when he was waited upon by the re-

presentatives of the Republican Club. He noticed the difference between their well-cut, smooth-fitting garments and his ill-fitting and badly wrinkled ones, and spoke of it freely to them. On his return to Springfield he told Herndon, his law partner, that for some time after he began his speech, and until he became warmed up, he imagined that the audience were noticing the contrast between his rude Western clothes and the neat and well-made suits of Mr. Bryant and others who sat on the platform. But this annoyance was of short duration, and he made no effort while in the East to improve his appearance.

As a Presidential candidate Lincoln appeared to the country an untoward being in face, figure, and movement. The recorded observations of the President's personal appearance from the time he arrived in Washington until his death, made by an ever-increasing number and almost indescribable diversity of people, corroborated Western observation, giving no indication that the older East saw differently from the younger West. And so, in consequence, while the feeling of Lincoln's rare and superior worth as a man has steadily increased since his death, with startling strides and unexpected surprises, his personal

appearance as it was first described has gone into unquestioned history. Biographers, statesmen, scholars, and writers have echoed ordinary observers with such persistence that it would seem that they took delight in trying to heighten the incongruous contrast between the outward and the inward man.

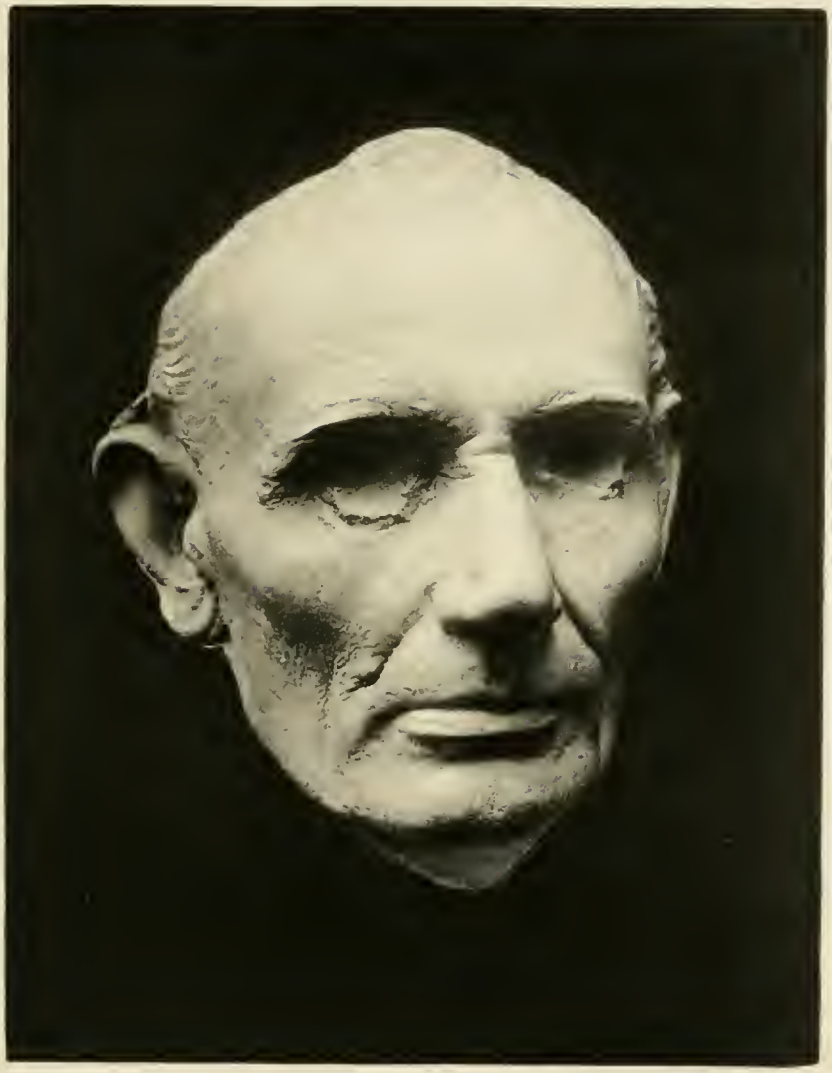
Lowell, in the "North American Review" for January, 1864, apologized for Lincoln's not being handsome or elegant, and at the close of the article called him homely and awkward. In his "Commemoration Ode," while fully recognizing the high character of the first American, he says that "they (the people) knew that outward grace is dust." In his Birmingham address he again alludes to this contrast, remarking: "But democracies have likewise their finer instincts. I have also seen the wisest statesman and most pregnant speaker of our generation, a man of humble birth and ungainly manners, of little culture beyond what his own genius supplied, become more absolute in power than any monarch of modern times, through the reverence of his countrymen for his honesty, his wisdom, his sincerity, his faith in God and man, and the nobly humane simplicity of his character."

Almost the only person who has publicly written against the popular belief concerning Lincoln's personal appearance is Hon. J. G. Nicolay, the President's private secretary and subsequent co-biographer.

He says that to him "there was neither oddity, eccentricity, awkwardness, or grotesqueness in his face, figure, or movement;" that, on the contrary, he was prepossessing in appearance when the entire man was fairly considered, mentally and physically, his unusual height and proportion, and the general movement of body and mind.

He also states that Lincoln's "walk was vigorous, elastic, easy, rather quick, firm, and dignified; no shuffling or hesitating; he had a large swing in his movement; and when enunciating a great thought that he wished to impress upon his hearers he would straighten up to an impressive height."

Mr. Nicolay gives this as his impression of Lincoln's appearance without seeking to corroborate it by any fact of physical construction. If the words quoted at the beginning of this paper were to be taken, as they have been by the world, as final and conclusive, and there were nothing else than the uncorroborated opinion of Mr. Nicolay



*Life Mask of Abraham Lincoln*
*Three quarters view from the plaster*

to assist in further examination, there would be no way out of the belief that Lincoln was an "awfully homely" man,—a human frame cruelly proportioned, with articulations orderless, aimless, and unpleasant, housing a wonderful heart and mind. But the truth is that these words were, in the large majority of cases, only parts of sentences, or parts of a thoughtless general summing up of the personal appearance of the man, while the other parts included words indicative of beautiful physical qualities, or statements of mental and physical relationships, admirable, significant, and suggestive.

Nor are these desirable qualities and relationships isolated ones, peculiar to or only affecting single members of the body; they are intimately connected with the whole physical structure, and furnish evidence that it was different from the physique first described. The excellences of Lincoln's appearance may be classed under two heads,—facial expression and general movement of the body.

The following descriptions of Lincoln's eyes were spoken or written without qualification, and are taken from a large number of sources, many of them being the recollections of women:—

"Soft, tender, bluish eyes;" "two bright, dreamy eyes that seem to gaze through you without looking at you;" "patient, loving eyes;" "the kindest eyes ever placed in mortal head;" "His eyes had an expression impossible to describe, as though they lay in deep caverns, ready to spring out at an instant call;" "His gray eyes would flash fire when speaking against slavery, or look volumes of love when speaking of liberty, justice, and the progress of mankind;" "His eyes had a far-away look;" "The saddest face that ever was seen — sadness seemed to drip from him as he walked;" "A sad, preoccupied, far-away look, so intense that he seemed to be in a trance;" "Inexpressible sadness in his eyes, with a far-away look, as if they were searching for something they had seen long, long years ago;" "Melancholy eyes that seemed to wander far away."

The rapid change of expression in Lincoln's eyes and face is thus set forth: —

"His little gray eyes flashed in a face aglow with the fire of his profound thoughts, and his uneasy movements and diffident manner sunk themselves beneath the waves of righteous indignation that came sweeping over him." "His eyes

flashed fire, he was no longer homely and ungainly, his whole appearance changed in an instant, his body was transformed, and his face was lighted with a mysterious inner light." "His eyes flashed with pleasure, and his sad countenance lighted up and became almost beautiful." "The dull, listless expression dropped like a mask. The melancholy shadow disappeared in a twinkling. The eyes began to sparkle, the mouth to smile, and the whole countenance was wreathed in animation." "When affected by humor, sympathy, or admiration for some heroic deed or sacrifice for the right, his face changed in an instant, the hard lines faded out of it, and the emotion seemed to diffuse itself all over him. His sad face of a sudden became radiant; he seemed like one inspired."

Several of Lincoln's friends to whom I wrote for early photographs of him answered that they had none, because no picture represented the light that was in his eyes when he was listening or speaking, and in such aspects alone did they wish to remember him. And one added, "It was then only that he was in the world."

Of Lincoln's naturalness, native dignity, and grace, this is said: —

"He had perfect naturalness, a native grace which never failed to shine through his words and acts." "He had the gentleness of the unspoiled child of nature." "He had a dignity of bearing and character that commanded respect." "Natural grandeur of demeanor." "A natural gentleman." "He had a wonderful countenance, easy dignity, and ever-present tact." "He always maintained a singular dignity and reserve without the least effort." "He was awkward, but it was the awkwardness of nature, which is akin to grace."

When I asked a Boston man, the closest observer in matters of men and art I ever knew, if he thought, as most people did, that Lincoln was awkward, he replied: "Yes, he was awkward, but with an elegance that a king might envy and common men despise. He moved with an ease that was in the highest degree impressive, and with a grace of nature that would have become a woman."

There is no difference of opinion in regard to the change that came over Lincoln's appearance from the time he began to address an audience until he became warmed up. At first he appeared awkward, diffident, and uneasy; but as soon

as he got hold of his subject, or it had got hold of him, he was another man. He seemed inspired, and was immensely imposing and dignified. He is thus described: "The act of expressing a great sentiment or concluding a fine period transformed Lincoln's awkwardness, uncouthness, and boorishness into beauty and nobility of bearing. In making a speech on a subject that deeply interested him, he often quivered all over with emotion, nearly stifling his utterance."

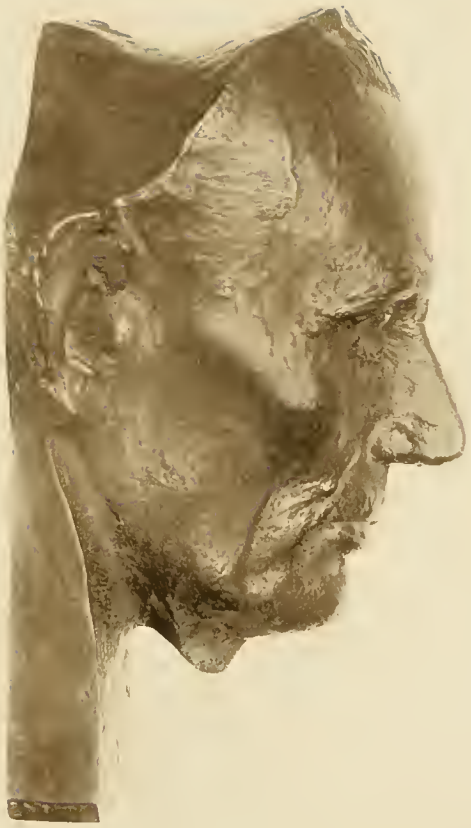
Of Lincoln's stretching-up capacity, or vertical elasticity, there is also no difference of opinion, and this, as the artist knows, is a quality marked only in people of the highest physical construction. That he could stretch up to an unwonted height, or appear to do so, is well authenticated.

In interesting conjunction with Lincoln's facial and physical transformations,— the ready expression of a rich and sensitive emotional nature,— may be placed his great muscular strength and activity, and the terrible character of his anger when aroused by injustice to himself or to a friend, though he was averse to any combative exercise of his strength save in a friendly wrestle, or to help some one in trouble.

Now we come to the crucial questions: Do

not the beautiful character of Lincoln's eyes, the sudden and peculiarly impressive change in his facial expression, his unusual power of stretching up, or vertical elasticity, and the rapidity and strength of his bodily movement, suggest the idea that there were admirable qualities in his physical make-up not included in the popular belief? It seems to me that these things suggest a splendidly sensitive, responsive, and powerful system of nerves; a muscular organization of a rare and superior kind; and that instead of high intellectual and emotional qualities incased in an ill-assorted body, it will be found that there was an admirable body, and a deep harmony between the outer and inner man. An examination of the portraits of Lincoln will help to make this apparent.

It is doubtful if any personage in history has had as many portraits made from life in the short space of seven years — by human workers in oil and clay, by sunlight in photographs, ambrotypes, and tintypes — as Abraham Lincoln. It began during the Douglas debates in 1858, became a campaign necessity in Springfield the second day after his nomination, and continued almost with-



*Right Profile of the Mask in bronze*

out interruption until forty days before he breathed his last.

Mr. L. W. Volk, a Chicago sculptor, was the first artist to whom Lincoln sat for his portrait,— a bust,— finished a month or two before the Chicago convention. An event occurred in the progress of making this bust that may be justly called the second most important one in the history of American portraiture,— the taking of a most perfect mask of the future President's face, — the other being a like process with the face of Washington in 1785, by the French sculptor Houdon.

This Lincoln mask is the first reliable contribution to the material upon which a safe examination of the forms of his face can be made. The photographs, ambrotypes, and tintypes made before and after he became President are also valuable contributions. Those, with casts of both his hands, taken a few days after his nomination, complete what there is of unquestionable material by which to judge of the character of Lincoln's face, figure, and physical movement.

It is to Frenchmen that the credit of first seeing the true beauty of the life mask, of appreciating it and describing it, is due. When, in 1877, I took a plaster copy to the oldest bronze founder

in Paris, to get it cast in bronze, I put it down on a table side by side with a mask of the Abbé Lamennais. The first words of the founder were: "What a beautiful face! Why, it's more beautiful and has more character than the Abbé's, and we think that is the handsomest one in France! What an extraordinary construction, and what fine forms it has!" Then he asked who it was, and added, "I shall take pleasure in showing it to So-and-so," naming several of the principal sculptors in Paris for whom he did work.

Some weeks after, when I went to get the bronze copy, the founder told me that these sculptors and others had seen the Lincoln mask and expressed themselves in the most appreciative terms of what they saw in it. Here in substance is what they said: "It is unusual in general construction, it has a new and interesting character, and its planes are remarkably beautiful and subtle. If it belongs to any type, and we know of none such, it must be a wonderful specimen of that type." Like things were said of it by other French artists, as I took pains to show it for examination. I lent the mask and a number of Lincoln photographs to the best French genre sculptor of modern times, for several months, for him to see what he could

get out of it in making a face in clay. When he got through he made these observations: "I can do nothing with that head, and I doubt if any one in these times can. The more I studied it, the more difficulties I found. The subtle character of its forms is beyond belief. There is no face like it."

Frémiet was particularly interested. He said, among other things: "It seems impossible that a new country like yours should produce such a face. It is unique." Then he asked, "Do you know anything about the physique of your martyr President? He must have been tall and slim, having little flesh, and very alert in action." As I was then making some sketches of a statuette, based upon a very little knowledge of Lincoln's physical appearance, Frémiet's suggestions were of great value, for I knew him to be a learned ethnologist. He then recommended me to get for a model a man of the neighborhood who was tall and slim, but very compactly built. His height was six feet, four inches, — the same, I learned long afterwards, as that of Lincoln. At the close of our conversation, Frémiet said, "You have in hand a wonderfully interesting subject. I envy you."

No word was uttered or suggested by any of these persons indicating consideration of the mask from a popular, or so-called "classic," point of view; it was invariably looked at from the point of view of individual character, as an original and interesting piece of facial construction, and admired for the harmony of the face with itself. There was no reference to ugliness, coarseness, or flabbiness of form. It was the same with the photographs shown to them.

A short detailed review of the mask would be something like this: a projecting face with unusual vigor and contrasts of planes; long, large, protruding ears; strong, angular lower jaw, and high chin; all lines of face muscular or bony, strongly, firmly, and delicately marked; the forehead wrinkled to the roots of the hair; the fullness above and immediately back of the temples very rich and firm, giving not only an important contrast to the line of the face below, but finishing that part of the head with a commanding form and outline.

The profile is also unusual, in the character of the lines and in their construction: first, the full line of the forehead, carried from the top of the nose upward; second, the projecting nose, prac-

*Left Profile of the Mask in bronze*

tically straight, and the distance from its end back to the upper lip, which is rather more than an eighth of an inch greater than with ordinary noses. The nose is thick in its body and wide on the top when looked at in front, and thus helps to make a harmonious face, because it catches so much light. The distance from the top of the nose, when seen in profile, to the inner corner of the eye, is again unusual. The end of the nose appears almost blunt, but its outline, when carefully examined, is very delicate. The skin, so far as can be judged from a somewhat worn mask, is not marked into small sections as in most skins, but is comparatively smooth, and indented with little holes, like enlarged pores. The firmness of the skin and muscles is evidenced by the correctness of the forms of the mask, as there is not the slightest indication that there was any change in them made by the weight of the plaster. The surface-forms of the forehead present an extraordinary variety, many of them being very subtle, yet decisive, and running into each other with a delicacy rarely seen in foreheads of males. It was this peculiarity and variety of forms of the entire face that made it difficult for the French sculptor to reproduce.

The skin accords with Herndon's statement that it had a smooth and leathery surface. It is this kind of skin that gives such incisive directness and decision to all the lines of the face. They have a character all their own. This fact is more evident in the stronger lines, such as those running down from the wings of the nose, and the sunken ones just back of them. In contrast to these lines may be noticed a dullness of form about the wings of the nose.

The mask is especially living, in that it strongly suggests Lincoln's undemonstrative self-consciousness, as well as a knightly readiness, seen in the photographs taken immediately after his nomination for the Presidency. The bronze copy shows these qualities with pleasing gravity. There is another rare quality about it, as it bears the marks of both youth and age. Lincoln was in his fifty-second year. The mask is in short a perfect reproduction of Lincoln's face, and greatly beautiful in its human style and gravity.

The large, thick, and protruding under lip injures the general harmony and delicacy of the face in the estimation of some keen observers, though not disturbing or lessening the very sensitive line of mouth. These persons connect this feature with

Lincoln's lack of sensibility in many matters, his absolute indifference to art, to the nicer comforts of physical life, and with a certain want of delicacy in observing the minor customs of a refined state of society. In other words, they interpret it as his face-mark of a certain physical obtuseness. Were it not for the high, firm chin, powerful jaw, and decided upper lip, all forming a well-proportioned combination, and thus reducing the lower lip to a less obtrusive effect, this member of the face would indeed seem unpleasantly large. Still, it is to be remembered that the right kind of a thick lower lip is a physiognomical mark of sensitiveness and tenderness of nature.

The Lincoln mask, as may be seen herein, does not lose in character by a comparison with the profile view of Washington. The force of Lincoln's individuality in such a connection is alone sufficient to stamp it as a wonderful one. Washington's head is a perfect example of its type.

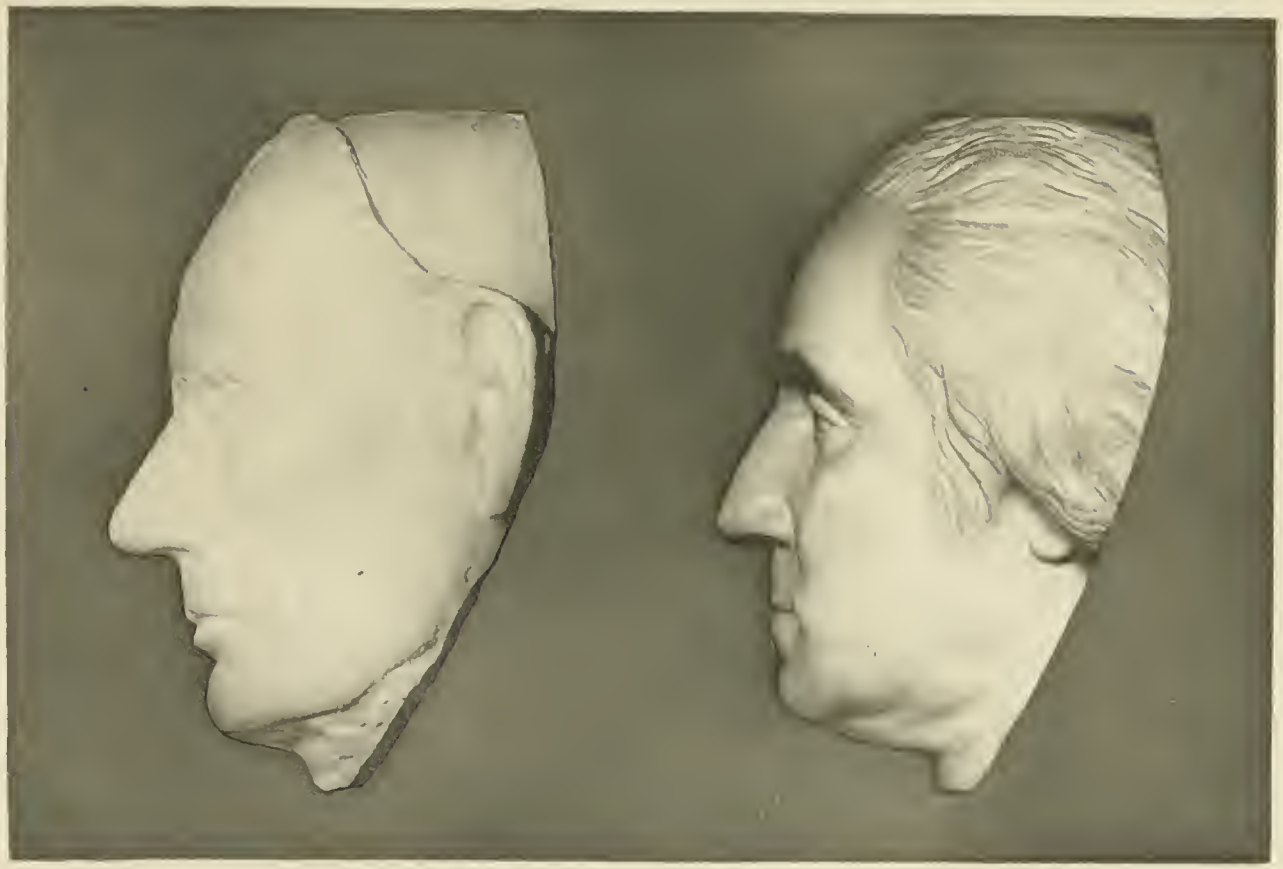
The casts of Lincoln's hands were made a few days after his nomination for the Presidency. They are large, long hands. The first phalanx of the middle finger is nearly half an inch longer than that of an ordinary hand. The bones are finely shaped, not unusually large, muscles thin, strongly

defined in their own construction and in their relations, finger nails of good form and of ordinary length. The joints are very supple. Were it not for the length of the fingers, the shape of the nails, the resemblance of the knuckles and the movement of the muscles on the inside of the right hand, one would doubt that it was the mate of the other. In contrast and variety of form, the left hand is as fine and original as is the mask; and both mask and hands are distinguished for exactitude of form.

The action of the folded fingers of the left hand is particularly noticeable, because it is so definite and complete, made with a purpose. This seemingly minor detail is, after all, representative of Lincoln's whole nature. It is an habitual one, as is the tendency to fold in the fingers. This concentration, or keeping together of the members of the body, is seen in nearly every one of the sixty portraits from life.

There is an extra fullness of the back of the right hand, in spite of the firm grip on the object it holds, caused, Mr. Volk says, by shaking hands with several hundreds of people just before the cast was made.

Nearest physiognomically to the mask are two



*Profiles of Lincoln and Washington*

photographs, taken at different times, one a little more and the other a little less than profile.[1] Except for the nose and the way the head sets on the neck and shoulders, these heads would hardly be taken as belonging to the same person. There are only four measurements that distinguish Lincoln's head and face from any other good head and face. First, the distance from the end of the nose back to the upper lip; second, the length and depth of the mouth from the profile line backwards; third, the distance from the wing of the nose up to the inside corner of the eye; and fourth, from the eye up to a horizontal line passing through both eyebrows. All these measurements are important and significant. The distance from the top of the nose just below where it joins the forehead, down to the inside corner of the eye, is a noticeable measurement. Another constructive distinction of Lincoln's face consists in the slight setting forward of the upper two thirds of the profile, beyond that found in most good faces,—one of the structural reasons for the superiority of the best Greek faces over all others. These, with the heavy, projecting, and easily moving eyebrows, make a combination of distances and

[1] See page 94.

forms of imposing distinction. All these constructive effects strike the observer unconsciously, and emphasize the effect of the eyes themselves. The appearance, to the ordinary observer, of "deep-set eyes" is due more to the unusual fullness and fine forms around than to their being further back than in most countenances. When we add to this their extraordinary emotional action, we get some explanation of their wonderful effect, so often described, upon the most casual observer. We shall appreciate this part of Lincoln's face more fully in the front-view photographs.

It is not alone the measurements but the character of the forms between them that make Lincoln's face and head unique. The prominence of the cheek bones is due more to an absence of fat and full muscle than to unusual size of bone. The character of the facial muscles, thin, firm, and elastic, is in accordance with Lincoln's light weight for a man of his height, — from one hundred and sixty to one hundred and eighty pounds, — his great strength and quickness of movement when excited, and his actual muscular construction as given by Herndon, which the latter called, with a good deal of truth, a set of sinews, or extended tendons. It all indicates economy of construction, and agrees

with the descriptions given of the economical workings of his mind.

The best front view of Lincoln is from a photograph asserted to have been taken March 9, 1864,[1] at the same time a similar view was made of Grant's face, and on the afternoon of the day that the latter received his commission as Lieutenant-General. As a whole it is probably the most impressively proportioned picture ever taken of Lincoln. It is all strange, in no respect like any other head. It is a large one, not in inches, but in construction, — a head that will hold its own in space, in the open air. In this rare respect it belongs to the few faces that are inherently decorative. It must be estimated by a standard authorized by itself. No such eyes were ever seen in mortal head, and no such setting was ever given to any other eyes. In all the photographs we see that the eyes and their framework confirm this statement. Careful observation shows that the muscles and skin around the eyes are very tender and sensitive, which may partly account for their unusual action in expressing emotion.

One of his most interesting photographs is that taken seated on the 2d of November, the Sunday

[1] See page 110.

before the delivery of the Gettysburg speech.[1] On the table at hand is a paper containing Everett's oration. Until I saw this photograph in Washington, in December, 1874, I supposed that Lincoln was as popularly described. When I first saw it I was amazed at the difference between it and current tradition. It struck me as the most original, easy, dignified, and impressive representation of a man in a sitting position I had ever seen. Years of looking at it and studying it in comparison with many others of the eminent men of modern times have confirmed that impression. Still greater confirmation I found in the opinions of three of the greatest sculptors of modern times, — Frémiet, Rodin, and Aubé; they were astonished at its original and imposing presence. "It is a new man; he has tremendous character," they said. Everything about this picture is surprisingly suggestive and admirable. The head in its massiveness, the way it is poised on the shoulders, the lines of the legs and arms, and especially the bend of the body, in spite of the coverings, are firm, fine, and easy. The kneepans are not over large or shapeless, nor do the hands show any incongruity in mass, line, or movement. There is

[1] See frontispiece.

*The Hands of Lincoln*

nothing in the hang of the clothes or their lines and folds that indicates anything but a well-shaped form beneath. No monarch ever sat with more natural grace and dignity.

The simple, easy line of the hand on the table, and that made by the foot and leg and the bend of the knee, suggest quite the opposite of clumsy and awkwardly constructed or moving articulations. It is a great portrait, — a great ready-made statue or picture. As such it ranks with the best portraits in any art, and as far as I know it is absolutely unique; again, as such, it means that Lincoln's mind and body not only worked together in perfect physical harmony, but exemplified a dignified and gracious ease. He made his own statue. It is his actual presence, the very life of the man. A statue is no more or less than a study of physiognomy with reference to the effect of light upon it as reproduced in marble, stone, or bronze.

Lincoln is dressed in modern costume, a costume condemned by every one, and especially when reproduced in sculpture. Yet I doubt if one person in a thousand would think of the costume when looking at this portrait. The simple fact is that Lincoln's body completely dominates his clothes, and would continue to do so in sculpture if properly executed.

There are many other significant details in this sitting portrait, of which a few may be mentioned. The legs are kept well together. Every action of legs, arms, hands, and feet is decisive, completing its intention, and all in natural harmony. This is a very important and significant fact, so much so that it may be taken as an ample starting-point for a full consideration of Lincoln's intellectual construction. So definite is the completion of intention that the right foot is placed fully upon the floor, and the full length of the other foot is also prone upon the floor. The position of these feet shows not only a flexible but a well-formed articulation. This flexibility of ankle joints permits the left foot to fall down, and thus not only saves it from being awkward by pointing up into the air, as nine hundred and ninety-nine feet in a thousand would do, but makes a fine line in connection with the leg. The size and character of Lincoln's feet, as shown through his boots, are in admirable accord with his body. They are well and forcibly formed, and of noticeable importance as a constructive fact.

In none of the sitting views is there any sign of a disposition to sprawl or spread around, as the majority of men do when sitting. No member,

like the hands, for instance, is obtrusive. These facts indicate natural elegance, high style in bodily action, and a concentrative physical economy in accordance with the beauty and character of Lincoln's mind.

The photograph of Lincoln and Little Tad[1] shows the President's great style of hand and its splendid articulation with the wrist. A hand fit not only for the first and greatest American, but in every way worthy to write, as he did, literature that is nothing less than biblical in its majestic simplicity. This view obviously depicts a perfectly natural position, taken by Lincoln without the aid of the photographer. He is completely together, unconscious, and absolutely indifferent to anything outside of himself.

From a point of view of physical and mental harmony of an unobtrusive and self-centred kind, its simple variety and contrast of planes betokening to an extreme the humble character of the man, the photograph of Lincoln in McClellan's tent[2] is, to me, the most unusual and strangely interesting of all the pictures ever taken of him in a sitting position. It is an extreme illustration of good physical centralization. If the first sitting

[1] See page 122.

[2] See page 82.

photograph that we have examined is as a ready-made statue, marvelous in its composition and more than kingly in its ease and dignity, this one is sculpturesque in its perfection as a bas-relief. Yet how humanly expressive it is in the simplicity and directness of the attention which the President is bestowing upon his companion. An essay could be written about it.

The world's great statues and figure-pieces in painting are made like great orations, great poems, and great judicial disquisitions, upon the lines, and in harmony with the authoritative divisions, of their subjects. Like all high, inspired productions, they hide themselves save to the deep and sincere student. The sitting photographs of Lincoln that we have rapidly examined are akin to them, and merit the same grave scientific and artistic consideration.

We shall now examine some photographs that will tax our best discrimination and appeal to our most considerate judgment, — pictures of such extraordinary significance that, to justly understand and appreciate them, we shall be obliged to put aside our habitual standard of judgment and pay tribute to the inherent authority of their own physical and mental con-

struction. They represent the President at Antietam headquarters.[1]

These photographs, with two others that we shall consider, are the only ones known to be in existence showing him at full length in a standing position.

At first sight Lincoln appears strange and even grotesque, with his unusual height, narrow shoulders, long arms hanging so listlessly by his sides, and that oddest of tall hats. The great majority of people would be strongly tempted to laugh at this strange figure standing there so absolutely alone. Few, if any, would think of making it a subject of careful study, or in any way regarding it as vitally related to the intellectual and human frame of one of the most wonderful beings that has appeared upon the earth, — a weird and mysterious being, who came into the world against convention, who performed functions as unique as they were far-reaching, and who left the world by the old mysteriously cruel road so often trod by its noblest.

He reminds one of the isolated figures in archaic sculpture, — straight, stiff, and uninteresting. But if we examine closely, we shall see that Lincoln's

[1] See pages 70, 88.

position is not only the sum of simplicity, but that his straightness is easy and unconscious, — all again illustrating the economy of his bodily action, the natural tendency toward the simplest movements, and a reliance upon himself. Even when excited in speaking, he made few gestures, so few that many say he made none. In walking there were no useless movements, and in sitting he got himself closely together, as we have already seen. Herndon, who studied his partner with more persistence than any one, says that he always stood squarely on both feet, both legs under him, never one ahead of the other, and that he never leaned on or touched anything while speaking. In this also the body of Lincoln was in harmony with his mental action. These figures are the most interesting ones I have ever seen of a man standing.

The pictures of Lincoln at Antietam, and with the Generals of the Army of the Potomac, give a sufficient opportunity to compare Lincoln's unconscious simplicity of vertical structure and pose with a dozen or more generals and civilians, not one of whom is not more or less conscious, and trying without success to stand well.

An added and almost pathetic interest gathers around this form when seen isolated from any

other. Its suggestiveness multiplies until it becomes a text for a discourse upon the entire character of the man, its sadness, its pathos, its isolation. It seems like a solitary dolmen in a deserted and barren plain, that has withstood the ravaging decay of centuries. As Lincoln's whole nature presents to history the most intricate and mysterious individual problem, so the photographs we have seen represent the only new physical organization of which we have any correct knowledge contributed by the New World to the ethnographic consideration of mankind.

TRUMAN H. BARTLETT.

# THE HAND OF LINCOLN

*The Hand of Lincoln*

## THE HAND OF LINCOLN

Look on this cast, and know the hand
That bore a nation in its hold:
From this mute witness understand
What Lincoln was,— how large of mould

The man who sped the woodman's team,
And deepest sunk the ploughman's share,
And pushed the laden raft astream,
Of fate before him unaware.

This was the hand that knew to swing
The axe — since thus would Freedom train
Her son — and made the forest ring,
And drove the wedge, and toiled amain.

Firm hand, that loftier office took,
A conscious leader's will obeyed,
And, when men sought his word and look,
With steadfast might the gathering swayed.

No courtier's, toying with a sword,
Nor minstrel's, laid across a lute;
A chief's, uplifted to the Lord
When all the kings of earth were mute!

The hand of Anak, sinewed strong,
The fingers that on greatness clutch;
Yet, lo! the marks their lines along
Of one who strove and suffered much.

For here in knotted cord and vein
I trace the varying chart of years;
I know the troubled heart, the strain,
The weight of Atlas — and the tears.

Again I see the patient brow
That palm erewhile was wont to press;
And now 't is furrowed deep, and now
Made smooth with hope and tenderness.

For something of a formless grace
This moulded outline plays about;
A pitying flame, beyond our trace,
Breathes like a spirit, in and out, —

The love that cast an aureole
Round one who, longer to endure,
Called mirth to ease his ceaseless dole,
Yet kept his nobler purpose sure.

Lo, as I gaze, the statured man,
Built up from yon large hand, appears:
A type that Nature wills to plan
But once in all a people's years.

What better than this voiceless cast
To tell of such a one as he,
Since through its living semblance passed
The thought that bade a race be free!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

NO American can study the character and career of Abraham Lincoln without being carried away by sentimental emotions. We are always inclined to idealize that which we love, — a state of mind very unfavorable to the exercise of sober critical judgment. It is therefore not surprising that most of those who have written or spoken on that extraordinary man, even while conscientiously endeavoring to draw a lifelike portraiture of his being, and to form a just estimate of his public conduct, should have drifted into more or less indiscriminating eulogy, painting his great features in the most glowing colors, and covering with tender shadings whatever might look like a blemish.

But his standing before posterity will not be exalted by mere praise of his virtues and abilities, nor by any concealment of his limitations and faults. The stature of the great man, one of whose peculiar charms consisted in his being so unlike

all other great men, will rather lose than gain by the idealization which so easily runs into the commonplace. For it was distinctly the weird mixture of qualities and forces in him, of the lofty with the common, the ideal with the uncouth, of that which he had become with that which he had not ceased to be, that made him so fascinating a character among his fellow men, gave him his singular power over their minds and hearts, and fitted him to be the greatest leader in the greatest crisis of our national life.

His was indeed a marvelous growth. The statesman or the military hero born and reared in a log cabin is a familiar figure in American history; but we may search in vain among our celebrities for one whose origin and early life equaled Abraham Lincoln's in wretchedness. He first saw the light in a miserable hovel in Kentucky, on a farm consisting of a few barren acres in a dreary neighborhood; his father a typical "poor Southern white," shiftless and improvident, without ambition for himself or his children, constantly looking for a new piece of land on which he might make a living without much work; his mother, in her youth handsome and bright, grown prematurely coarse in feature and soured in mind by daily toil and

care; the whole household squalid, cheerless, and utterly void of elevating inspirations. Only when the family had "moved" into the malarious backwoods of Indiana, the mother had died, and a stepmother, a woman of thrift and energy, had taken charge of the children, the shaggy-headed, ragged, barefooted, forlorn boy, then seven years old, "began to feel like a human being." Hard work was his early lot. When a mere boy he had to help in supporting the family, either on his father's clearing, or hired out to other farmers to plough, or dig ditches, or chop wood, or drive ox teams; occasionally also to "tend the baby" when the farmer's wife was otherwise engaged. He could regard it as an advancement to a higher sphere of activity when he obtained work in a "cross-roads store," where he amused the customers by his talk over the counter; for he soon distinguished himself among the backwoods folk as one who had something to say worth listening to. To win that distinction, he had to draw mainly upon his wits; for while his thirst for knowledge was great, his opportunities for satisfying that thirst were woefully slender.

In the log schoolhouse, which he could visit but little, he was taught only reading, writing, and

elementary arithmetic. Among the people of the settlement, bush farmers and small tradesmen, he found none of uncommon intelligence or education; but some of them had a few books, which he borrowed eagerly. Thus he read and re-read Æsop's Fables, learning to tell stories with a point and to argue by parables; he read Robinson Crusoe, The Pilgrim's Progress, a short history of the United States, and Weems's Life of Washington. To the town constable's he went to read the Revised Statutes of Indiana. Every printed page that fell into his hands he would greedily devour, and his family and friends watched him with wonder, as the uncouth boy, after his daily work, crouched in a corner of the log cabin or outside under a tree, absorbed in a book while munching his supper of corn bread. In this manner he began to gather some knowledge, and sometimes he would astonish the girls with such startling remarks as that the earth was moving around the sun, and not the sun around the earth, and they marveled where "Abe" could have got such queer notions. Soon he also felt the impulse to write, not only making extracts from books he wished to remember, but also composing little essays of his own. First he sketched these with charcoal on a wooden

shovel scraped white with a drawing-knife, or on basswood shingles. Then he transferred them to paper, which was a scarce commodity in the Lincoln household, taking care to cut his expressions close, so that they might not cover too much space, — a style-forming method greatly to be commended. Seeing boys put a burning coal on the back of a wood turtle, he was moved to write on cruelty to animals. Seeing men intoxicated with whiskey, he wrote on temperance. In verse-making, too, he tried himself, and in satire on persons offensive to him or others, — satire the rustic wit of which was not always fit for ears polite. Also political thoughts he put upon paper, and some of his pieces were even deemed good enough for publication in the county weekly.

Thus he won a neighborhood reputation as a clever young man, which he increased by his performances as a speaker, not seldom drawing upon himself the dissatisfaction of his employers by mounting a stump in the field, and keeping the farm hands from their work by little speeches in a jocose and sometimes also a serious vein. At the rude social frolics of the settlement he became an important person, telling funny stories, mimicking the itinerant preachers who had happened to

pass by, and making his mark at wrestling matches, too; for at the age of seventeen he had attained his full height, six feet four inches in his stockings, if he had any, and a terribly muscular clodhopper he was. But he was known never to use his extraordinary strength to the injury or humiliation of others; rather to do them a kindly turn, or to enforce justice and fair dealing between them. All this made him a favorite in backwoods society, although in some things he appeared a little odd to his friends. Far more than any of them, he was given, not only to reading, but to fits of abstraction, to quiet musing with himself, and also to strange spells of melancholy, from which he often would pass in a moment to rollicking outbursts of droll humor. But on the whole he was one of the people among whom he lived; in appearance perhaps even a little more uncouth than most of them, — a very tall, rawboned youth, with large features, dark, shriveled skin, and rebellious hair; his arms and legs long, out of proportion; clad in deerskin trousers, which from frequent exposure to the rain had shrunk so as to sit tightly on his limbs, leaving several inches of bluish shin exposed between their lower end and the heavy tan-colored shoes; the nether garment

A. Lincoln.

held usually by only one suspender, that was strung over a coarse home-made shirt; the head covered in winter with a coonskin cap, in summer with a rough straw hat of uncertain shape, without a band.

It is doubtful whether he felt himself much superior to his surroundings, although he confessed to a yearning for some knowledge of the world outside of the circle in which he lived. This wish was gratified; but how? At the age of nineteen he went down the Mississippi to New Orleans as a flatboat hand, temporarily joining a trade many members of which at that time still took pride in being called "half horse and half alligator." After his return he worked and lived in the old way until the spring of 1830, when his father "moved again," this time to Illinois; and on the journey of fifteen days "Abe" had to drive the ox wagon which carried the household goods. Another log cabin was built, and then, fencing a field, Abraham Lincoln split those historic rails which were destined to play so picturesque a part in the presidential campaign twenty-eight years later.

Having come of age, Lincoln left the family, and "struck out for himself." He had "to take

jobs whenever he could get them." The first of these carried him again as a flatboat hand to New Orleans. There something happened that made a lasting impression upon his soul: he witnessed a slave auction. "His heart bled," wrote one of his companions; "said nothing much; was silent; looked bad. I can say, knowing it, that it was on this trip that he formed his opinion on slavery. It run its iron in him then and there, May, 1831. I have heard him say so often." Then he lived several years at New Salem, in Illinois, a small mushroom village, with a mill, some "stores" and whiskey shops, that rose quickly, and soon disappeared again. It was a desolate, disjointed, half-working, and half-loitering life, without any other aim than to gain food and shelter from day to day. He served as pilot on a steamboat trip, then as clerk in a store and a mill; business failing, he was adrift for some time. Being compelled to measure his strength with the chief bully of the neighborhood, and overcoming him, he became a noted person in that muscular community, and won the esteem and friendship of the ruling gang of ruffians to such a degree that, when the Black Hawk war broke out, they elected him, a young man of twenty-three, captain of a volunteer com-

pany, composed mainly of roughs of their kind. He took the field, and his most noteworthy deed of valor consisted, not in killing an Indian, but in protecting against his own men, at the peril of his own life, the life of an old savage who had strayed into his camp.

The Black Hawk war over, he turned to politics. The step from the captaincy of a volunteer company to a candidacy for a seat in the legislature seemed a natural one. But his popularity, although great in New Salem, had not spread far enough over the district, and he was defeated. Then the wretched hand-to-mouth struggle began again. He "set up in store business" with a dissolute partner, who drank whiskey while Lincoln was reading books. The result was a disastrous failure and a load of debt. Thereupon he became a deputy surveyor, and was appointed postmaster of New Salem, the business of the post-office being so small that he could carry the incoming and outgoing mail in his hat. All this could not lift him from poverty, and his surveying instruments and horse and saddle were sold by the sheriff for debt.

But while all this misery was upon him, his ambition rose to higher aims. He walked many

miles to borrow from a schoolmaster a grammar with which to improve his language. A lawyer lent him a copy of Blackstone, and he began to study law. People would look wonderingly at the grotesque figure lying in the grass, "with his feet up a tree," or sitting on a fence, as, absorbed in a book, he learned to construct correct sentences and made himself a jurist. At once he gained a little practice, pettifogging before a justice of the peace for friends, without expecting a fee. Judicial functions, too, were thrust upon him, but only at horse-races or wrestling matches, where his acknowledged honesty and fairness gave his verdicts undisputed authority. His popularity grew apace, and soon he could be a candidate for the legislature again. Although he called himself a Whig, an ardent admirer of Henry Clay, his clever stump speeches won him the election in the strongly Democratic district. Then for the first time, perhaps, he thought seriously of his outward appearance. So far he had been content with a garb of "Kentucky jeans," not seldom ragged, usually patched, and always shabby. Now he borrowed some money from a friend to buy a new suit of clothes — "store clothes" — fit for a Sangamon County statesman; and thus adorned he set out

for the state capital, Vandalia, to take his seat among the lawmakers.

His legislative career, which stretched over several sessions, for he was thrice reëlected, in 1836, 1838, and 1840, was not remarkably brilliant. He did, indeed, not lack ambition. He dreamed even of making himself "the De Witt Clinton of Illinois," and he actually distinguished himself by zealous and effective work in those "log-rolling" operations by which the young State received "a general system of internal improvements" in the shape of railroads, canals, and banks, — a reckless policy, burdening the State with debt, and producing the usual crop of political demoralization, but a policy characteristic of the time and the impatiently enterprising spirit of the Western people. Lincoln, no doubt with the best intentions, but with little knowledge of the subject, simply followed the popular current. The achievement in which, perhaps, he gloried most was the removal of the state government from Vandalia to Springfield, — one of those triumphs of political management which are apt to be the pride of the small politician's statesmanship. One thing, however, he did in which his true nature asserted itself, and which gave distinct promise of the future pursuit of high aims. Against

an overwhelming preponderance of sentiment in the legislature, followed by only one other member, he recorded his protest against a proslavery resolution, — that protest declaring "the institution of slavery to be founded on both injustice and bad policy." This was not only the irrepressible voice of his conscience; it was true moral valor, too; for at that time, in many parts of the West, an abolitionist was regarded as little better than a horse-thief, and even "Abe Lincoln" would hardly have been forgiven his anti-slavery principles had he not been known as such an "uncommon good fellow." But here, in obedience to the great conviction of his life, he manifested his courage to stand alone, — that courage which is the first requisite of leadership in a great cause.

Together with his reputation and influence as a politician grew his law practice, especially after he had removed from New Salem to Springfield, and associated himself with a practitioner of good standing. He had now at last won a fixed position in society. He became a successful lawyer, less, indeed, by his learning as a jurist than by his effectiveness as an advocate and by the striking uprightness of his character; and it may truly be said that his vivid sense of truth and justice had much to do with his

effectiveness as an advocate. He would refuse to act as the attorney even of personal friends when he saw the right on the other side. He would abandon cases, even during trial, when the testimony convinced him that his client was in the wrong. He would dissuade those who sought his service from pursuing an obtainable advantage when their claims seemed to him unfair. Presenting his very first case in the United States Circuit Court, the only question being one of authority, he declared that, upon careful examination, he found all the authorities on the other side, and none on his. Persons accused of crime, when he thought them guilty, he would not defend at all, or, attempting their defense, he was unable to put forth his powers. One notable exception is on record, when his personal sympathies had been strongly aroused. But when he felt himself to be the protector of innocence, the defender of justice, or the prosecutor of wrong, he frequently disclosed such unexpected resources of reasoning, such depth of feeling, and rose to such fervor of appeal as to astonish and overwhelm his hearers and make him fairly irresistible. Even an ordinary law argument, coming from him, seldom failed to produce the impression that he was profoundly convinced of the soundness of his posi-

tion. It is not surprising that the mere appearance of so conscientious an attorney in any case should have carried, not only to juries, but even to judges, almost a presumption of right on his side, and that the people began to call him, sincerely meaning it, "honest Abe Lincoln."

In the mean time he had private sorrows and trials of a painfully afflicting nature. He had loved and been loved by a fair and estimable girl, Ann Rutledge, who died in the flower of her youth and beauty, and he mourned her loss with such intensity of grief that his friends feared for his reason. Recovering from his morbid depression, he bestowed what he thought a new affection upon another lady, who refused him. And finally, moderately prosperous in his worldly affairs, and having prospects of political distinction before him, he paid his addresses to Mary Todd, of Kentucky, and was accepted. But then tormenting doubts of the genuineness of his own affection for her, of the compatibility of their characters, and of their future happiness came upon him. His distress was so great that he felt himself in danger of suicide, and feared to carry a pocket-knife with him; and he gave mortal offense to his bride by not appearing on the appointed wedding day. Now the tortur-

ing consciousness of the wrong he had done her grew unendurable. He won back her affection, ended the agony by marrying her, and became a faithful and patient husband and a good father. But it was no secret, to those who knew the family well, that his domestic life was full of trials. The erratic temper of his wife not seldom put the gentleness of his nature to the severest tests; and these troubles and struggles, which accompanied him through all the vicissitudes of his life from the modest home in Springfield to the White House at Washington, adding untold private heartburnings to his public cares, and sometimes precipitating upon him incredible embarrassments in the discharge of his public duties, form one of the most pathetic features of his career.

He continued to "ride the circuit," read books while traveling in his buggy, told funny stories to his fellow lawyers in the tavern, chatted familiarly with his neighbors around the stove in the store and at the post-office, had his hours of melancholy brooding as of old, and became more and more widely known and trusted and beloved among the people of his State for his ability as a lawyer and politician, for the uprightness of his character, and the ever-flowing spring of sympathetic kindness in

his heart. His main ambition was confessedly that of political distinction; but hardly any one would at that time have seen in him the man destined to lead the nation through the greatest crisis of the century.

His time had not yet come when, in 1846, he was elected to Congress. In a clever speech in the House of Representatives, he denounced President Polk for having unjustly forced war upon Mexico, and he amused the Committee of the Whole by a witty attack upon General Cass. More important was the expression he gave to his anti-slavery impulses by offering a bill looking to the emancipation of the slaves in the District of Columbia, and by his repeated votes for the famous Wilmot Proviso, intended to exclude slavery from the Territories acquired from Mexico. But when, at the expiration of his term, in March, 1849, he left his seat, he gloomily despaired of ever seeing the day when the cause nearest to his heart would be rightly grasped by the people, and when he would be able to render any service to his country in solving the great problem. Nor had his career as a member of Congress in any sense been such as to gratify his ambition. Indeed, if he ever had any belief in a great destiny for himself, it must have been weak at that

period; for he actually sought to obtain from the new Whig President, General Taylor, the place of Commissioner of the General Land Office, willing to bury himself in one of the administrative bureaus of the government. Fortunately for the country, he failed; and no less fortunately, when, later, the territorial governorship of Oregon was offered to him, Mrs. Lincoln's protest induced him to decline it. Returning to Springfield, he gave himself with renewed zest to his law practice, acquiesced in the Compromise of 1850 with reluctance and a mental reservation, supported in the presidential campaign of 1852 the Whig candidate in some spiritless speeches, and took but a languid interest in the politics of the day. But just then his time was drawing near.

The peace promised, and apparently inaugurated, by the Compromise of 1850 was rudely broken by the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise, opening the Territories of the United States, the heritage of coming generations, to the invasion of slavery, suddenly revealed the whole significance of the slavery question to the people of the free States, and thrust itself into the politics of the country as the paramount issue. Some-

thing like an electric shock flashed through the North. Men who but a short time before had been absorbed by their business pursuits, and deprecated all political agitation, were startled out of their security by a sudden alarm, and excitedly took sides. That restless trouble of conscience about slavery, which even in times of apparent repose had secretly disturbed the souls of Northern people, broke forth in an utterance louder than ever. The bonds of accustomed party allegiance gave way. Anti-slavery Democrats and anti-slavery Whigs felt themselves drawn together by a common overpowering sentiment, and soon they began to rally in a new organization. The Republican party sprang into being to meet the overruling call of the hour. Then Abraham Lincoln's time was come. He rapidly advanced to a position of conspicuous championship in the struggle. This, however, was not owing to his virtues and abilities alone. Indeed, the slavery question stirred his soul in its profoundest depths; it was, as one of his intimate friends said, "the only one on which he would become excited;" it called forth all his faculties and energies. Yet there were many others who, having long and arduously fought the anti-slavery battle in the popular assembly, or in the press, or in the

halls of Congress, far surpassed him in prestige, and compared with whom he was still an obscure and untried man. His reputation, although highly honorable and well earned, had so far been essentially local. As a stump-speaker in Whig canvasses outside of his State, he had attracted comparatively little attention; but in Illinois he had been recognized as one of the foremost men of the Whig party. Among the opponents of the Nebraska bill he occupied in his State so important a position that in 1854 he was the choice of a large majority of the "Anti-Nebraska men" in the legislature for a seat in the Senate of the United States which then became vacant; and when he, an old Whig, could not obtain the votes of the Anti-Nebraska Democrats necessary to make a majority, he generously urged his friends to transfer their votes to Lyman Trumbull, who was then elected. Two years later, in the first national convention of the Republican party, the delegation from Illinois brought him forward as a candidate for the vice-presidency, and he received respectable support. Still, the name of Abraham Lincoln was not widely known beyond the boundaries of his own State. But now it was this local prominence in Illinois that put him in a position of peculiar advantage

on the battlefield of national politics. In the assault on the Missouri Compromise which broke down all legal barriers to the spread of slavery, Stephen Arnold Douglas was the ostensible leader and central figure; and Douglas was a senator from Illinois, Lincoln's State. Douglas's national theatre of action was the Senate, but in his constituency in Illinois were the roots of his official position and power. What he did in the Senate he had to justify before the people of Illinois, in order to maintain himself in place; and in Illinois all eyes turned to Lincoln as Douglas's natural antagonist.

As very young men they had come to Illinois, Lincoln from Indiana, Douglas from Vermont, and had grown up together in public life, Douglas as a Democrat, Lincoln as a Whig. They had met first in Vandalia, in 1834, when Lincoln was in the legislature and Douglas in the lobby; and again in 1836, both as members of the legislature. Douglas, a very able politician, of the agile, combative, audacious, "pushing" sort, rose in political distinction with remarkable rapidity. In quick succession he became a member of the legislature, a State's attorney, Secretary of State, a judge on the supreme bench of Illinois, three times a representative in Congress, and a senator of the United States when

*Abraham Lincoln in 1861*

only thirty-nine years old. In the national Democratic convention of 1852, he appeared even as an aspirant to the nomination for the presidency, as the favorite of "young America," and received a respectable vote. He had far outstripped Lincoln in what is commonly called political success and in reputation. But it had frequently happened that in political campaigns Lincoln felt himself impelled, or was selected by his Whig friends, to answer Douglas's speeches; and thus the two were looked upon, in a large part of the State at least, as the representative combatants of their respective parties in the debates before popular meetings. As soon, therefore, as, after the passage of his Kansas-Nebraska bill, Douglas returned to Illinois to defend his cause before his constituents, Lincoln, obeying not only his own impulse, but also general expectation, stepped forward as his principal opponent. Thus the struggle about the principles involved in the Kansas-Nebraska bill, or, in a broader sense, the struggle between freedom and slavery, assumed in Illinois the outward form of a personal contest between Lincoln and Douglas; and as it continued and became more animated, that personal contest in Illinois was watched with constantly increasing interest by the whole coun-

try. When, in 1858, Douglas's senatorial term being about to expire, Lincoln was formally designated by the Republican convention of Illinois as their candidate for the Senate, to take Douglas's place, and the two contestants agreed to debate the questions at issue face to face in a series of public meetings, the eyes of the whole American people were turned eagerly to that one point; and the spectacle reminded one of those lays of ancient times telling of two armies, in battle array, standing still to see their two principal champions fight out the contested cause between the lines in single combat.

Lincoln had then reached the full maturity of his powers. His equipment as a statesman did not embrace a comprehensive knowledge of public affairs. What he had studied he had indeed made his own, with the eager craving and that zealous tenacity characteristic of superior minds learning under difficulties. But his narrow opportunities and the unsteady life he had led during his younger years had not permitted the accumulation of large stores in his mind. It is true, in political campaigns he had occasionally spoken on the ostensible issues between the Whigs and the Democrats, the tariff, internal improvements, banks, and so on, but only

in a perfunctory manner. Had he ever given much serious thought and study to these subjects, it is safe to assume that a mind so prolific of original conceits as his would certainly have produced some utterance upon them worth remembering. His soul had evidently never been deeply stirred by such topics. But when his moral nature was aroused, his brain developed an untiring activity until it had mastered all the knowledge within reach. As soon as the repeal of the Missouri Compromise had thrust the slavery question into politics as the paramount issue, Lincoln plunged into an arduous study of all its legal, historical, and moral aspects, and then his mind became a complete arsenal of argument. His rich natural gifts, trained by long and varied practice, had made him an orator of rare persuasiveness. In his immature days, he had pleased himself for a short period with that inflated, high-flown style which, among the uncultivated, passes for "beautiful speaking." His inborn truthfulness and his artistic instinct soon overcame that aberration, and revealed to him the noble beauty and strength of simplicity. He possessed an uncommon power of clear and compact statement, which might have reminded those who knew the story of his early youth of the efforts of the poor boy, when he copied his

compositions from the scraped wooden shovel, carefully to trim his expressions in order to save paper. His language had the energy of honest directness, and he was a master of logical lucidity. He loved to point and enliven his reasoning by humorous illustrations, usually anecdotes of Western life, of which he had an inexhaustible store at his command. These anecdotes had not seldom a flavor of rustic robustness about them, but he used them with great effect, while amusing the audience, to give life to an abstraction, to explode an absurdity, to clinch an argument, to drive home an admonition. The natural kindliness of his tone, softening prejudice and disarming partisan rancor, would often open to his reasoning a way into minds most unwilling to receive it.

Yet his greatest power consisted in the charm of his individuality. That charm did not, in the ordinary way, appeal to the ear or to the eye. His voice was not melodious; rather shrill and piercing, especially when it rose to its high treble in moments of great animation. His figure was unhandsome, and the action of his unwieldy limbs awkward. He commanded none of the outward graces of oratory as they are commonly understood. His charm was of a different kind. It flowed from the rare depth and

genuineness of his convictions and his sympathetic feelings. Sympathy was the strongest element in his nature. One of his biographers, who knew him before he became President, says: "Lincoln's compassion might be stirred deeply by an object present, but never by an object absent and unseen. In the former case he would most likely extend relief, with little inquiry into the merits of the case, because, as he expressed it himself, it 'took a pain out of his own heart.'" Only half of this is correct. It is certainly true that he could not witness any individual distress or oppression, or any kind of suffering, without feeling a pang of pain himself, and that by relieving as much as he could the suffering of others he put an end to his own. This compassionate impulse to help he felt not only for human beings, but for every living creature. As in his boyhood he angrily reproved the boys who tormented a wood turtle by putting a burning coal on its back, so, we are told, he would, when a mature man, on a journey, dismount from his buggy and wade waist-deep in mire to rescue a pig struggling in a swamp. Indeed, appeals to his compassion were so irresistible to him, and he felt it so difficult to refuse anything when his refusal could give pain, that he himself sometimes spoke of his inability to say "no" as

a positive weakness. But that certainly does not prove that his compassionate feeling was confined to individual cases of suffering witnessed with his own eyes. As the boy was moved by the aspect of the tortured wood turtle to compose an essay against cruelty to animals in general, so the aspect of other cases of suffering and wrong wrought up his moral nature, and set his mind to work against cruelty, injustice, and oppression in general.

As his sympathy went forth to others, it attracted others to him. Especially those whom he called the "plain people" felt themselves drawn to him by the instinctive feeling that he understood, esteemed, and appreciated them. He had grown up among the poor, the lowly, the ignorant. He never ceased to remember the good souls he had met among them, and the many kindnesses they had done him. Although in his mental development he had risen far above them, he never looked down upon them. How they felt and how they reasoned he knew, for so he had once felt and reasoned himself. How they could be moved he knew, for so he had once been moved himself, and he practiced moving others. His mind was much larger than theirs, but it thoroughly comprehended theirs; and while he thought much farther than they, their thoughts were ever

*Lincoln with his Generals at Antietam*

present to him. Nor had the visible distance between them grown as wide as his rise in the world would seem to have warranted. Much of his backwoods speech and manners still clung to him. Although he had become "Mr. Lincoln" to his later acquaintances, he was still "Abe" to the "Nats" and "Billys" and "Daves" of his youth; and their familiarity neither appeared unnatural to them, nor was it in the least awkward to him. He still told and enjoyed stories similar to those he had told and enjoyed in the Indiana settlement and at New Salem. His wants remained as modest as they had ever been; his domestic habits had by no means completely accommodated themselves to those of his more high-born wife; and though the "Kentucky jeans" apparel had long been dropped, his clothes of better material and better make would sit ill sorted on his gigantic limbs. His cotton umbrella, without a handle, and tied together with a coarse string to keep it from flapping, when he carried on his circuit rides, is said to be remembered still by some of his surviving neighbors. This rusticity of habit was utterly free from that affected contempt of refinement and comfort which self-made men sometimes carry into their more affluent circumstances. To Abraham Lincoln it was

entirely natural, and all those who came into contact with him knew it to be so. In his ways of thinking and feeling he had become a gentleman in the highest sense, but the refining process had polished but little the outward form. The plain people, therefore, still considered "honest Abe Lincoln" one of themselves: and when they felt, which they no doubt frequently did, that his thoughts and aspirations moved in a sphere above their own, they were all the more proud of him, without any diminution of fellow feeling. It was this relation of mutual sympathy and understanding between Lincoln and the plain people that gave him his peculiar power as a public man, and singularly fitted him, as we shall see, for that leadership which was preëminently required in the great crisis then coming on,—the leadership which indeed thinks and moves ahead of the masses, but always remains within sight and sympathetic touch of them.

He entered upon the campaign of 1858 better equipped than he had ever been before. He not only instinctively felt, but he had convinced himself by arduous study, that in this struggle against the spread of slavery he had right, justice, philosophy, the enlightened opinion of mankind, history, the Constitution, and good policy on his side.

It was observed that after he began to discuss the slavery question his speeches were pitched in a much loftier key than his former oratorical efforts. While he remained fond of telling funny stories in private conversation, they disappeared more and more from his public discourse. He would still now and then point his argument with expressions of inimitable quaintness, and flash out rays of kindly humor and witty irony; but his general tone was serious, and rose sometimes to genuine solemnity. His masterly skill in dialectical thrust and parry, his wealth of knowledge, his power of reasoning, and elevation of sentiment, disclosed in language of rare precision, strength, and beauty, not seldom astonished his old friends.

Neither of the two champions could have found a more formidable antagonist than each now met in the other. Douglas was by far the most conspicuous member of his party. His admirers had dubbed him "the little giant," contrasting in that nickname the greatness of his mind with the smallness of his body. But though of low stature, his broad-shouldered figure appeared uncommonly sturdy, and there was something lion-like in the squareness of his brow and jaw, and in the defiant shake of his long hair. His loud and persistent advocacy

of territorial expansion, in the name of patriotism and "manifest destiny," had given him an enthusiastic following among the young and ardent. Great natural parts, a highly combative temperament, and long training had made him a debater unsurpassed in a Senate filled with able men. He could be as forceful in his appeals to patriotic feelings as he was fierce in denunciation and thoroughly skilled in all the baser tricks of parliamentary pugilism. While genial and rollicking in his social intercourse,—the idol of the "boys,"—he felt himself one of the most renowned statesmen of his time, and would frequently meet his opponents with an overbearing haughtiness, as persons more to be pitied than to be feared. In his speech opening the campaign of 1858, he spoke of Lincoln, whom the Republicans had dared to advance as their candidate for "his" place in the Senate, with an air of patronizing if not contemptuous condescension, as "a kind, amiable, and intelligent gentleman and a good citizen." The little giant would have been pleased to pass off his antagonist as a tall dwarf. He knew Lincoln too well, however, to indulge himself seriously in such a delusion. But the political situation was at that moment in a curious tangle, and Douglas could expect to

derive from the confusion great advantage over his opponent.

By the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, opening the Territories to the ingress of slavery, Douglas had pleased the South, but greatly alarmed the North. He had sought to conciliate Northern sentiment by appending to his Kansas-Nebraska bill the declaration that its intent was "not to legislate slavery into any State or Territory, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." This he called "the great principle of popular sovereignty." When asked whether, under this act, the people of a Territory, before its admission as a State, would have the right to exclude slavery, he answered, "That is a question for the courts to decide." Then came the famous "Dred Scott decision," in which the Supreme Court held substantially that the right to hold slaves as property existed in the Territories by virtue of the Federal Constitution, and that this right could not be denied by any act of a territorial government. This, of course, denied the right of the people of any Territory to exclude slavery while they were in a territorial condition, and it alarmed the

Northern people still more. Douglas recognized the binding force of the decision of the Supreme Court, at the same time maintaining, most illogically, that his great principle of popular sovereignty remained in force nevertheless. Meanwhile, the pro-slavery people of western Missouri, the so-called "border ruffians," had invaded Kansas, set up a constitutional convention, made a constitution of an extreme pro-slavery type, the "Lecompton Constitution," refused to submit it fairly to a vote of the people of Kansas, and then referred it to Congress for acceptance, — seeking thus to accomplish the admission of Kansas as a slave State. Had Douglas supported such a scheme, he would have lost all foothold in the North. In the name of popular sovereignty he loudly declared his opposition to the acceptance of any constitution not sanctioned by a formal popular vote. He "did not care," he said, "whether slavery be voted up or down," but there must be a fair vote of the people. Thus he drew upon himself the hostility of the Buchanan administration, which was controlled by the pro-slavery interest, but he saved his Northern following. More than this, not only did his Democratic admirers now call him "the true champion of freedom," but even some Republicans of large

influence, prominent among them Horace Greeley, sympathizing with Douglas in his fight against the Lecompton Constitution, and hoping to detach him permanently from the pro-slavery interest and to force a lasting breach in the Democratic party, seriously advised the Republicans of Illinois to give up their opposition to Douglas, and to help reëlect him to the Senate. Lincoln was not of that opinion. He believed that great popular movements can succeed only when guided by their faithful friends, and that the anti-slavery cause could not safely be intrusted to the keeping of one who "did not care whether slavery be voted up or down." This opinion prevailed in Illinois; but the influences within the Republican party, over which it prevailed, yielded only a reluctant acquiescence, if they acquiesced at all, after having materially strengthened Douglas's position. Such was the situation of things when the campaign of 1858 between Lincoln and Douglas began.

Lincoln opened the campaign on his side, at the convention which nominated him as the Republican candidate for the senatorship, with a memorable saying which sounded like a shout from the watch-tower of history: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot

endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, — old as well as new, North as well as South." Then he proceeded to point out that the Nebraska doctrine combined with the Dred Scott decision worked in the direction of making the nation "all slave." Here was the "irrepressible conflict" spoken of by Seward a short time later, in a speech made famous mainly by that phrase. If there was any new discovery in it, the right of priority was Lincoln's. This utterance proved not only his statesmanlike conception of the issue, but also, in his situation as a candidate, the firmness of his moral courage. The friends to whom he had read the draught of this speech before he delivered it warned him anxiously that its delivery might be fatal to his success in the election. This was shrewd advice, in the ordinary sense. While a slaveholder could threaten disunion with impunity, the mere

suggestion that the existence of slavery was incompatible with freedom in the Union would hazard the political chances of any public man in the North. But Lincoln was inflexible. "It is true," said he, "and I *will* deliver it as written. . . . I would rather be defeated with these expressions in my speech held up and discussed before the people than be victorious without them." The statesman was right in his far-seeing judgment and his conscientious statement of the truth, but the practical politicians were also right in their prediction of the immediate effect. Douglas instantly seized upon the declaration that a house divided against itself cannot stand as the main objective point of his attack, interpreting it as an incitement to a "relentless sectional war," and there is no doubt that the persistent reiteration of this charge served to frighten not a few timid souls.

Lincoln constantly endeavored to bring the moral and philosophical side of the subject to the foreground. "Slavery is wrong" was the keynote of all his speeches. To Douglas's glittering sophism that the right of the people of a Territory to have slavery or not, as they might desire, was in accordance with the principle of true popular sovereignty, he made the pointed answer: "Then true popular

sovereignty, according to Senator Douglas, means that, when one man makes another man his slave, no third man shall be allowed to object." To Douglas's argument that the principle which demanded that the people of a Territory should be permitted to choose whether they would have slavery or not "originated when God made man, and placed good and evil before him, allowing him to choose upon his own responsibility," Lincoln solemnly replied: "No; God did not place good and evil before man, telling him to make his choice. On the contrary, God did tell him there was one tree of the fruit of which he should not eat, upon pain of death." He did not, however, place himself on the most advanced ground taken by the radical anti-slavery men. He admitted that, under the Constitution, "the Southern people were entitled to a congressional fugitive slave law," although he did not approve the fugitive slave law then existing. He declared also that, if slavery were kept out of the Territories during their territorial existence, as it should be, and if then the people of any Territory, having a fair chance and a clear field, should do such an extraordinary thing as to adopt a slave constitution, uninfluenced by the actual presence of the institution among them, he saw no alternative

but to admit such a Territory into the Union. He declared further that, while he should be exceedingly glad to see slavery abolished in the District of Columbia, he would, as a member of Congress, with his present views, not endeavor to bring on that abolition except on condition that emancipation be gradual, that it be approved by the decision of a majority of voters in the District, and that compensation be made to unwilling owners. On every available occasion, he pronounced himself in favor of the deportation and colonization of the blacks, of course with their consent. He repeatedly disavowed any wish on his part to have social and political equality established between whites and blacks. On this point he summed up his views in a reply to Douglas's assertion that the Declaration of Independence, in speaking of all men as being created equal, did not include the negroes, saying: "I do not understand the Declaration of Independence to mean that all men were created equal in all respects. They are not equal in color. But I believe that it does mean to declare that all men are equal in some respects; they are equal in their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

With regard to some of these subjects Lincoln modified his position at a later period, and it has

been suggested that he would have professed more advanced principles in his debates with Douglas, had he not feared thereby to lose votes. This view can hardly be sustained. Lincoln had the courage of his opinions, but he was not a radical. The man who risked his election by delivering, against the urgent protest of his friends, the speech about "the house divided against itself" would not have shrunk from the expression of more extreme views, had he really entertained them. It is only fair to assume that he said what at the time he really thought, and that if, subsequently, his opinions changed, it was owing to new conceptions of good policy and of duty brought forth by an entirely new set of circumstances and exigencies. It is characteristic that he continued to adhere to the impracticable colonization plan even after the Emancipation Proclamation had already been issued.

But in this contest Lincoln proved himself not only a debater, but also a political strategist of the first order. The "kind, amiable, and intelligent gentleman," as Douglas had been pleased to call him, was by no means as harmless as a dove. He possessed an uncommon share of that worldly shrewdness which not seldom goes with genuine simplicity of character; and the political experience gathered

*Lincoln and General McClellan at Antietam*

in the legislature and in Congress and in many election campaigns, added to his keen intuitions, had made him as far-sighted a judge of the probable effects of a public man's sayings or doings upon the popular mind, and as accurate a calculator in estimating political chances and forecasting results, as could be found among the party managers in Illinois. And now he perceived keenly the ugly dilemma in which Douglas found himself, between the Dred Scott decision, which declared the right to hold slaves to exist in the Territories by virtue of the Federal Constitution, and his "great principle of popular sovereignty," according to which the people of a Territory, if they saw fit, were to have the right to exclude slavery therefrom. Douglas was twisting and squirming to the best of his ability to avoid the admission that the two were incompatible. The question then presented itself if it would be good policy for Lincoln to force Douglas to a clear expression of his opinion as to whether, the Dred Scott decision notwithstanding, "the people of a Territory could in any lawful way exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution." Lincoln foresaw and predicted what Douglas would answer: that slavery could not exist in a Territory unless the people desired it

and gave it protection by territorial legislation. In an improvised caucus the policy of pressing the interrogatory on Douglas was discussed. Lincoln's friends unanimously advised against it, because the answer foreseen would sufficiently commend Douglas to the people of Illinois to insure his reëlection to the Senate. But Lincoln persisted. "I am after larger game," said he. "If Douglas so answers, he can never be President, and the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." The interrogatory was pressed upon Douglas, and Douglas did answer that, no matter what the decision of the Supreme Court might be on the abstract question, the people of a Territory had the lawful means to introduce or exclude slavery by territorial legislation friendly or unfriendly to the institution. Lincoln found it easy to show the absurdity of the proposition that, if slavery were admitted to exist of right in the Territories by virtue of the supreme law, the Federal Constitution, it could be kept out or expelled by an inferior law, one made by a territorial legislature. Again the judgment of the politicians, having only the nearest object in view, proved correct: Douglas was reëlected to the Senate. But Lincoln's judgment proved correct also: Douglas, by resorting to the expedient of his "unfriendly legislation

doctrine," forfeited his last chance of becoming President of the United States. He might have hoped to win, by sufficient atonement, his pardon from the South for his opposition to the Lecompton Constitution; but that he taught the people of the Territories a trick by which they could defeat what the pro-slavery men considered a constitutional right, and that he called that trick lawful, — this the slave power would never forgive. The breach between the Southern and the Northern democracy was thenceforth irremediable and fatal.

The presidential election of 1860 approached. The struggle in Kansas, and the debates in Congress which accompanied it, and which not unfrequently provoked violent outbursts, continually stirred the popular excitement. Within the Democratic party raged the war of factions. The national Democratic convention met at Charleston on the 23d of April, 1860. After a struggle of ten days between the adherents and the opponents of Douglas, during which the delegates from the cotton States had withdrawn, the convention adjourned without having nominated any candidates, to meet again in Baltimore on the 18th of June. There was no prospect, however, of reconciling the hostile elements. It appeared very probable that the Bal-

timore convention would nominate Douglas, while the seceding Southern Democrats would set up a candidate of their own, representing extreme pro-slavery principles.

Meanwhile, the national Republican convention assembled at Chicago on the 16th of May, full of enthusiasm and hope. The situation was easily understood. The Democrats would have the South. In order to succeed in the election, the Republicans had to win, in addition to the States carried by Frémont in 1856, those that were classed as "doubtful,"—New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Indiana, or Illinois in the place of either New Jersey or Indiana. The most eminent Republican statesmen and leaders of the time thought of for the presidency were Seward and Chase, both regarded as belonging to the more advanced order of anti-slavery men. Of the two, Seward had the largest following, mainly from New York, New England, and the Northwest. Cautious politicians doubted seriously whether Seward, to whom some phrases in his speeches had unreservedly given the reputation of a reckless radical, would be able to command the whole Republican vote in the doubtful States. Besides, during his long public career he had made enemies. It was evident that those who

thought Seward's nomination too hazardous an experiment would consider Chase unavailable for the same reason. They would then look round for an "available" man; and among the "available" men Abraham Lincoln was easily discovered to stand foremost. His great debate with Douglas had given him a national reputation. The people of the East being eager to see the hero of so dramatic a contest, he had been induced to visit several Eastern cities, and had astonished and delighted large and distinguished audiences with speeches of singular power and originality. An address delivered by him in the Cooper Institute in New York, before an audience containing a large number of important persons, was then, and has ever since been, especially praised as one of the most logical and convincing political speeches ever made in this country. The people of the West had grown proud of him as a distinctively Western great man, and his popularity at home had some peculiar features which could be expected to exercise a potent charm. Nor was Lincoln's name as that of an available candidate left to the chance of accidental discovery. It is indeed not probable that he thought of himself as a presidential possibility, during his contest with Douglas for the senatorship. As late as April, 1859, he had written

to a friend who had approached him on the subject that he did not think himself fit for the presidency. The vice-presidency was then the limit of his ambition. But some of his friends in Illinois took the matter seriously in hand, and Lincoln, after some hesitation, then formally authorized "the use of his name." The matter was managed with such energy and excellent judgment that in the convention he had not only the whole vote of Illinois to start with, but won votes on all sides without offending any rival. A large majority of the opponents of Seward went over to Abraham Lincoln, and gave him the nomination on the third ballot. As had been foreseen, Douglas was nominated by one wing of the Democratic party at Baltimore, while the extreme pro-slavery wing put Breckinridge into the field as its candidate. After a campaign conducted with the energy of genuine enthusiasm on the anti-slavery side, the united Republicans defeated the divided Democrats, and Lincoln was elected President by a majority of fifty-seven votes in the electoral colleges.

The result of the election had hardly been declared when the disunion movement in the South, long threatened and carefully planned and prepared, broke out in the shape of open revolt, and

*Abraham Lincoln*

nearly a month before Lincoln could be inaugurated as President of the United States, seven Southern States had adopted ordinances of secession, formed an independent confederacy, framed a constitution for it, and elected Jefferson Davis its president, expecting the other slaveholding States soon to join them. On the 11th of February, 1861, Lincoln left Springfield for Washington; having, with characteristic simplicity, asked his law partner not to change the sign of the firm "Lincoln and Herndon" during the four years' unavoidable absence of the senior partner, and having taken an affectionate and touching leave of his neighbors.

The situation which confronted the new President was appalling: the larger part of the South in open rebellion, the rest of the slaveholding States wavering, preparing to follow; the revolt guided by determined, daring, and skillful leaders; the Southern people, apparently full of enthusiasm and military spirit, rushing to arms, some of the forts and arsenals already in their possession; the government of the Union, before the accession of the new President, in the hands of men some of whom actively sympathized with the revolt, while others were hampered by their traditional doctrines in dealing with it, and really gave it aid and comfort by their irreso-

lute attitude; all the departments full of "Southern sympathizers" and honeycombed with disloyalty; the treasury empty, and the public credit at the lowest ebb; the arsenals ill supplied with arms, if not emptied by treacherous practices; the regular army of insignificant strength, dispersed over an immense surface, and deprived by defection of some of its best officers; the navy small and antiquated. But that was not all. The threat of disunion had so often been resorted to by the slave power in years gone by that most Northern people had ceased to believe in its seriousness. But when disunion actually appeared as a stern reality, something like a chill swept through the whole Northern country. A cry for union and peace at any price rose on all sides. Democratic partisanship reiterated this cry with vociferous vehemence, and even many Republicans grew afraid of the victory they had just achieved at the ballot-box, and spoke of compromise. The country fairly resounded with the noise of "anti-coercion meetings." Expressions of firm resolution from determined anti-slavery men were indeed not wanting, but they were for a while almost drowned by a bewildering confusion of discordant voices. Even this was not all. Potent influences in Europe, with an ill-concealed desire for the permanent disrup-

tion of the American Union, eagerly espoused the cause of the Southern seceders, and the two principal maritime powers of the Old World seemed only to be waiting for a favorable opportunity to lend them a helping hand.

This was the state of things to be mastered by "honest Abe Lincoln" when he took his seat in the presidential chair,—"honest Abe Lincoln," who was so good natured that he could not say "no;" the greatest achievement in whose life had been a debate on the slavery question; who had never been in any position of power; who was without the slightest experience of high executive duties, and who had only a speaking acquaintance with the men upon whose counsel and coöperation he was to depend. Nor was his accession to power under such circumstances greeted with general confidence even by the members of his party. While he had indeed won much popularity, many Republicans, especially among those who had advocated Seward's nomination for the presidency, with a feeling little short of dismay, saw the simple "Illinois lawyer" take the reins of government. The orators and journals of the opposition were ridiculing and lampooning him without measure. Many people actually wondered how such a man could dare to

undertake a task which, as he himself had said to his neighbors in his parting speech, was "more difficult than that of Washington himself had been."

But Lincoln brought to that task, aside from other uncommon qualities, the first requisite, — an intuitive comprehension of its nature. While he did not indulge in the delusion that the Union could be maintained or restored without a conflict of arms, he could indeed not foresee all the problems he would have to solve. He instinctively understood, however, by what means that conflict would have to be conducted by the government of a democracy. He knew that the impending war, whether great or small, would not be like a foreign war, exciting a united national enthusiasm, but a civil war, likely to fan to uncommon heat the animosities of party even in the localities controlled by the government; that this war would have to be carried on, not by means of a ready-made machinery, ruled by an undisputed, absolute will, but by means to be furnished by the voluntary action of the people: — armies to be formed by voluntary enlistment; large sums of money to be raised by the people, through their representatives, voluntarily taxing themselves; trusts of extraordinary power to be voluntarily granted; and war measures, not seldom restricting

the rights and liberties to which the citizen was accustomed, to be voluntarily accepted and submitted to by the people, or at least a large majority of them; — and that this would have to be kept up, not merely during a short period of enthusiastic excitement, but possibly through weary years of alternating success and disaster, hope and despondency. He knew that in order to steer this government by public opinion successfully through all the confusion created by the prejudices and doubts and differences of sentiment distracting the popular mind, and so to propitiate, inspire, mould, organize, unite, and guide the popular will that it might give forth all the means required for the performance of his great task, he would have to take into account all the influences strongly affecting the current of popular thought and feeling, and to direct while appearing to obey.

This was the kind of leadership he intuitively conceived to be needed when a free people were to be led forward *en masse* to overcome a great common danger under circumstances of appalling difficulty, — the leadership which does not dash ahead with brilliant daring, no matter who follows, but which is intent upon rallying all the available forces, gathering in the stragglers, closing up the column,

so that the front may advance well supported. For this leadership Abraham Lincoln was admirably fitted, — better than any other American statesman of his day; for he understood the plain people, with all their loves and hates, their prejudices and their noble impulses, their weaknesses and their strength, as he understood himself, and his sympathetic nature was apt to draw their sympathy to him.

His inaugural address foreshadowed his official course in characteristic manner. Although yielding nothing in point of principle, it was by no means a flaming anti-slavery manifesto, such as would have pleased the more ardent Republicans. It was rather the entreaty of a sorrowing father speaking to his wayward children. In the kindliest language he pointed out to the secessionists how ill-advised their attempt at disunion was, and why, for their own sakes, they should desist. Almost plaintively he told them that, while it was not *their* duty to destroy the Union, it was *his* sworn duty to preserve it; that the least he could do, under the obligations of his oath, was to possess and hold the property of the United States; that he hoped to do this peaceably; that he abhorred war for any purpose, and that they would have none unless they

*Right and left profile of Abraham Lincoln*

themselves were the aggressors. It was a masterpiece of persuasiveness; and while Lincoln had accepted many valuable amendments suggested by Seward, it was essentially his own. Probably Lincoln himself did not expect his inaugural address to have any effect upon the secessionists, for he must have known them to be resolved upon disunion at any cost. But it was an appeal to the wavering minds in the North, and upon them it made a profound impression. Every candid man, however timid and halting, had to admit that the President was bound by his oath to do his duty; that under that oath he could do no less than he said he would do; that if the secessionists resisted such an appeal as the President had made, they were bent upon mischief, and that the government must be supported against them. The partisan sympathy with the Southern insurrection which still existed in the North did indeed not disappear, but it diminished perceptibly under the influence of such reasoning. Those who still resisted it did so at the risk of appearing unpatriotic.

It must not be supposed, however, that Lincoln at once succeeded in pleasing everybody, even among his friends, — even among those nearest to him. In selecting his cabinet, which he did substantially be-

fore he left Springfield for Washington, he thought it wise to call to his assistance the strong men of his party, especially those who had given evidence of the support they commanded as his competitors in the Chicago convention. In them he found at the same time representatives of the different shades of opinion within the party, and of the different elements — former Whigs and former Democrats — from which the party had recruited itself. This was sound policy under the circumstances. It might indeed have been foreseen that among the members of a cabinet so composed, troublesome disagreements and rivalries would break out. But it was better for the President to have these strong and ambitious men near him as his coöperators than to have them as his critics in Congress, where their differences might have been composed in a common opposition to him. As members of his cabinet he could hope to control them, and to keep them busily employed in the service of a common purpose, if he had the strength to do so. Whether he did possess this strength was soon tested by a singularly rude trial.

There can be no doubt that the foremost members of his cabinet, Seward and Chase, the most eminent Republican statesmen, had felt themselves

wronged by their party when in its national convention it preferred to them for the presidency a man whom, not unnaturally, they thought greatly their inferior in ability and experience as well as in service. The soreness of that disappointment was intensified when they saw this Western man in the White House, with so much of rustic manner and speech as still clung to him, meeting his fellow citizens, high and low, on a footing of equality, with the simplicity of his good nature unburdened by any conventional dignity of deportment, and dealing with the great business of state in an easy-going, unmethodical, and apparently somewhat irreverent way. They did not understand such a man. Especially Seward, who, as Secretary of State, considered himself next to the Chief Executive, and who quickly accustomed himself to giving orders and making arrangements upon his own motion, thought it necessary that he should rescue the direction of public affairs from hands so unskilled, and take full charge of them himself. At the end of the first month of the administration he submitted a "memorandum" to President Lincoln, which has been first brought to light by Nicolay and Hay, and is one of their most valuable contributions to the history of those days. In that paper Seward actually told the Presi-

dent that, at the end of a month's administration, the government was still without a policy, either domestic or foreign; that the slavery question should be eliminated from the struggle about the Union; that the matter of the maintenance of the forts and other possessions in the South should be decided with that view; that explanations should be demanded categorically from the governments of Spain and France, which were then preparing, one for the annexation of San Domingo, and both for the invasion of Mexico; that if no satisfactory explanations were received, war should be declared against Spain and France by the United States; that explanations should also be sought from Russia and Great Britain, and a vigorous continental spirit of independence against European intervention be aroused all over the American continent; that this policy should be incessantly pursued and directed by somebody; that either the President should devote himself entirely to it, or devolve the direction on some member of his cabinet, whereupon all debate on this policy must end.

This could be understood only as a formal demand that the President should acknowledge his own incompetency to perform his duties, content himself with the amusement of distributing post-

offices, and resign his power as to all important affairs into the hands of his Secretary of State. It seems to-day incomprehensible how a statesman of Seward's calibre could at that period conceive a plan of policy in which the slavery question had no place; a policy which rested upon the utterly delusive assumption that the secessionists, who had already formed their Southern Confederacy, and were with stern resolution preparing to fight for its independence, could be hoodwinked back into the Union by some sentimental demonstration against European interference; a policy which, at that critical moment, would have involved the Union in a foreign war, thus inviting foreign intervention in favor of the Southern Confederacy, and increasing tenfold its chances in the struggle for independence. But it is equally incomprehensible how Seward could fail to see that this demand of an unconditional surrender was a mortal insult to the head of the government, and that by putting his proposition on paper he delivered himself into the hands of the very man he had insulted; for had Lincoln, as most Presidents would have done, instantly dismissed Seward, and published the true reason for that dismissal, it would inevitably have been the end of Seward's career. But Lincoln did what not

many of the noblest and greatest men in history would have been noble and great enough to do. He considered that Seward, if rightly controlled, was still capable of rendering great service to his country in the place in which he was. He ignored the insult, but firmly established his superiority. In his reply, which he forthwith dispatched, he told Seward that the administration had a domestic policy as laid down in the inaugural address with Seward's approval; that it had a foreign policy as traced in Seward's dispatches with the President's approval; that if any policy was to be maintained or changed, he, the President, was to direct that on his responsibility; and that in performing that duty the President had a right to the advice of his secretaries. Seward's fantastic schemes of foreign war and continental policies Lincoln brushed aside by passing them over in silence. Nothing more was said. Seward must have felt that he was at the mercy of a superior man; that his offensive proposition had been generously pardoned as a temporary aberration of a great mind, and that he could atone for it only by devoted personal loyalty. This he did. He was thoroughly subdued, and thenceforth submitted to Lincoln his dispatches for revision and amendment without a murmur. The war with

European nations was no longer thought of; the slavery question found in due time its proper place in the struggle for the Union; and when, at a later period, the dismissal of Seward was demanded by dissatisfied senators who attributed to him the shortcomings of the administration, Lincoln stood stoutly by his faithful Secretary of State.

Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, a man of superb presence, of eminent ability and ardent patriotism, of great natural dignity and a certain outward coldness of manner, which made him appear more difficult of approach than he really was, did not permit his disappointment to burst out in such extravagant demonstrations. But Lincoln's ways were so essentially different from his that they never became quite intelligible, and certainly not congenial to him. It might, perhaps, have been better had there been, at the beginning of the administration, some decided clash between Lincoln and Chase, as there was between Lincoln and Seward, to bring on a full mutual explanation, and to make Chase appreciate the real seriousness of Lincoln's nature. But as it was, their relations always remained somewhat formal, and Chase never felt quite at ease under a chief whom he could not understand, and whose character and powers he never learned to

esteem at their true value. At the same time, he devoted himself zealously to the duties of his department, and did the country arduous service under circumstances of extreme difficulty. Nobody recognized this more heartily than Lincoln himself, and they managed to work together until near the end of Lincoln's first presidential term, when Chase, after some disagreements concerning appointments to office, resigned from the treasury; and after Taney's death, the President made him Chief Justice.

The rest of the cabinet consisted of men of less eminence, who subordinated themselves more easily. In January, 1862, Lincoln found it necessary to bow Cameron out of the war office, and to put in his place Edwin M. Stanton, a man of intensely practical mind, vehement impulses, fierce positiveness, ruthless energy, immense working power, lofty patriotism, and severest devotion to duty. He accepted the war office, not as a partisan, for he had never been a Republican, but only to do all he could in "helping to save the country." The manner in which Lincoln succeeded in taming this lion to his will, by frankly recognizing his great qualities, by giving him the most generous confidence, by aiding him in his work to the full of his power,

*Lincoln and his Secretaries*

by kindly concession or affectionate persuasiveness in cases of differing opinions, or, when it was necessary, by firm assertions of superior authority, bears the highest testimony to his skill in the management of men. Stanton, who had entered the service with rather a mean opinion of Lincoln's character and capacity, became one of his warmest, most devoted, and most admiring friends, and with none of his secretaries was Lincoln's intercourse more intimate. To take advice with candid readiness, and to weigh it without any pride of his own opinion, was one of Lincoln's preëminent virtues; but he had not long presided over his cabinet council when his was felt by all its members to be the ruling mind.

The cautious policy foreshadowed in his inaugural address, and pursued during the first period of the civil war, was far from satisfying all his party friends. The ardent spirits among the Union men thought that the whole North should at once be called to arms, to crush the rebellion by one powerful blow. The ardent spirits among the anti-slavery men insisted that, slavery having brought forth the rebellion, this powerful blow should at once be aimed at slavery. Both complained that the administration was spiritless, undecided, and lamentably slow in its proceedings. Lincoln reasoned other-

wise. The ways of thinking and feeling of the masses, of the plain people, were constantly present to his mind. The masses, the plain people, had to furnish the men for the fighting, if fighting was to be done. He believed that the plain people would be ready to fight when it clearly appeared necessary, and that they would feel that necessity when they felt themselves attacked. He therefore waited until the enemies of the Union struck the first blow. As soon as, on the 12th of April, 1861, the first gun was fired in Charleston harbor on the Union flag upon Fort Sumter, the call was sounded, and the Northern people rushed to arms.

Lincoln knew that the plain people were now indeed ready to fight in defense of the Union, but not yet ready to fight for the destruction of slavery. He declared openly that he had a right to summon the people to fight for the Union, but not to summon them to fight for the abolition of slavery as a primary object; and this declaration gave him numberless soldiers for the Union who at that period would have hesitated to do battle against the institution of slavery. For a time he succeeded in rendering harmless the cry of the partisan opposition that the Republican administration was perverting the war for the Union into an "abolition war." But

when he went so far as to countermand the acts of some generals in the field, looking to the emancipation of the slaves in the districts covered by their commands, loud complaints arose from earnest anti-slavery men, who accused the President of turning his back upon the anti-slavery cause. Many of these anti-slavery men will now, after a calm retrospect, be willing to admit that it would have been a hazardous policy to endanger, by precipitating a demonstrative fight against slavery, the success of the struggle for the Union.

Lincoln's views and feelings concerning slavery had not changed. Those who conversed with him intimately upon the subject at that period know that he did not expect slavery long to survive the triumph of the Union, even if it were not immediately destroyed by the war. In this he was right. Had the Union armies achieved a decisive victory in an early period of the conflict, and had the seceded States been received back with slavery, the "slave power" would then have been a defeated power,—defeated in an attempt to carry out its most effective threat. It would have lost its prestige. Its menaces would have been hollow sound, and ceased to make any one afraid. It could no longer have hoped to expand, to maintain an equilibrium in any

branch of Congress, and to control the government. The victorious free States would have largely overbalanced it. It would no longer have been able to withstand the onset of a hostile age. It could no longer have ruled, — and slavery had to rule in order to live. It would have lingered for a while, but it would surely have been "in the course of ultimate extinction." A prolonged war precipitated the destruction of slavery; a short war might only have prolonged its death struggle. Lincoln saw this clearly; but he saw also that, in a protracted death struggle, it might still have kept disloyal sentiments alive, bred distracting commotions, and caused great mischief to the country. He therefore hoped that slavery would not survive the war.

But the question how he could rightfully employ his power to bring on its speedy destruction was to him not a question of mere sentiment. He himself set forth his reasoning upon it, at a later period, in one of his inimitable letters. "I am naturally anti-slavery," said he. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember the time when I did not so think and feel. And yet I have never understood that the presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act upon that judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the

best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using that power. I understood, too, that, in ordinary civil administration, this oath even forbade me practically to indulge my private abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I did understand, however, also, that my oath imposed upon me the duty of preserving, to the best of my ability, by every indispensable means, that government, that nation, of which the Constitution was the organic law. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even *tried* to preserve the Constitution if, to save slavery, or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitution all together." In other words, if the salvation of the government, the Constitution, and the Union demanded the destruction of slavery, he felt it to be not only his right, but his sworn duty to destroy it. Its destruction became a necessity of the war for the Union.

As the war dragged on and disaster followed disaster, the sense of that necessity steadily grew upon him. Early in 1862, as some of his friends well remember, he saw, what Seward seemed not to see, that

to give the war for the Union an anti-slavery character was the surest means to prevent the recognition of the Southern Confederacy as an independent nation by European powers; that, slavery being abhorred by the moral sense of civilized mankind, no European government would dare to offer so gross an insult to the public opinion of its people as openly to favor the creation of a state founded upon slavery to the prejudice of an existing nation fighting against slavery. He saw also that slavery untouched was to the rebellion an element of power, and that in order to overcome that power it was necessary to turn it into an element of weakness. Still, he felt no assurance that the plain people were prepared for so radical a measure as the emancipation of the slaves by act of the government, and he anxiously considered that, if they were not, this great step might, by exciting dissension at the North, injure the cause of the Union in one quarter more than it would help it in another. He heartily welcomed an effort made in New York to mould and stimulate public sentiment on the slavery question by public meetings boldly pronouncing for emancipation. At the same time he himself cautiously advanced with a recommendation, expressed in a special message to Congress, that the United States

should coöperate with any State which might adopt the gradual abolishment of slavery, giving such State pecuniary aid to compensate the former owners of emancipated slaves. The discussion was started, and spread rapidly. Congress adopted the resolution recommended, and soon went a step farther in passing a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. The plain people began to look at emancipation on a larger scale, as a thing to be considered seriously by patriotic citizens; and soon Lincoln thought that the time was ripe, and that the edict of freedom could be ventured upon without danger of serious confusion in the Union ranks.

The failure of McClellan's movement upon Richmond increased immensely the prestige of the enemy. The need of some great act to stimulate the vitality of the Union cause seemed to grow daily more pressing. On July 21, 1862, Lincoln surprised his cabinet with the draught of a proclamation declaring free the slaves in all the States that should be still in rebellion against the United States on the 1st of January, 1863. As to the matter itself he announced that he had fully made up his mind; he invited advice only concerning the form and the time of publication. Seward suggested that the proclamation, if then brought out, amidst disaster

and distress, would sound like the last shriek of a perishing cause. Lincoln accepted the suggestion, and the proclamation was postponed. Another defeat followed, the second at Bull Run. But when, after that battle, the Confederate army, under Lee, crossed the Potomac and invaded Maryland, Lincoln vowed in his heart that, if the Union army were now blessed with success, the decree of freedom should surely be issued. The victory of Antietam was won on September 17, and the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation came forth on the 22d. It was Lincoln's own resolution and act; but practically it bound the nation, and permitted no step backward. In spite of its limitations, it was the actual abolition of slavery. Thus he wrote his name upon the books of history with the title dearest to his heart, — the liberator of the slave.

It is true, the great proclamation, which stamped the war as one for "union and freedom," did not at once mark the turning of the tide on the field of military operations. There were more disasters, — Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. But with Gettysburg and Vicksburg the whole aspect of the war changed. Step by step, now more slowly, then more rapidly, but with increasing steadiness, the flag of the Union advanced from field to field toward

*Abraham Lincoln*

the final consummation. The decree of emancipation was naturally followed by the enlistment of emancipated negroes in the Union armies. This measure had a farther-reaching effect than merely giving the Union armies an increased supply of men. The laboring force of the rebellion was hopelessly disorganized. The war became like a problem of arithmetic. As the Union armies pushed forward, the area from which the Southern Confederacy could draw recruits and supplies constantly grew smaller, while the area from which the Union recruited its strength constantly grew larger: and everywhere, even within the Southern lines, the Union had its allies. The fate of the rebellion was then virtually decided; but it still required much bloody work to convince the brave warriors who fought for it that they were really beaten.

Neither did the Emancipation Proclamation forthwith command universal assent among the people who were loyal to the Union. There were even signs of a reaction against the administration in the fall elections of 1862, seemingly justifying the opinion, entertained by many, that the President had really anticipated the development of popular feeling. The cry that the war for the Union had been turned into an "abolition war" was raised

again by the opposition, and more loudly than ever. But the good sense and patriotic instincts of the plain people gradually marshaled themselves on Lincoln's side, and he lost no opportunity to help on this process by personal argument and admonition. There never has been a President in such constant and active contact with the public opinion of the country, as there never has been a President who, while at the head of the government, remained so near to the people. Beyond the circle of those who had long known him, the feeling steadily grew that the man in the White House was "honest Abe Lincoln" still, and that every citizen might approach him with complaint, expostulation, or advice, without danger of meeting a rebuff from power-proud authority or humiliating condescension; and this privilege was used by so many and with such unsparing freedom that only superhuman patience could have endured it all. There are men now living who would to-day read with amazement, if not regret, what they then ventured to say or write to him. But Lincoln repelled no one whom he believed to speak to him in good faith and with patriotic purpose. No good advice would go unheeded. No candid criticism would offend him. No honest opposition, while it might pain him, would pro-

duce a lasting alienation of feeling between him and the opponent. It may truly be said that few men in power have ever been exposed to more daring attempts to direct their course, to severer censure of their acts, and to more cruel misrepresentation of their motives. And all this he met with that good-natured humor peculiarly his own, and with untiring effort to see the right and to impress it upon those who differed from him. The conversations he had and the correspondence he carried on upon matters of public interest, not only with men in official position, but with private citizens, were almost unceasing, and in a large number of public letters, written ostensibly to meetings, or committees, or persons of importance, he addressed himself directly to the popular mind. Most of these letters stand among the finest monuments of our political literature. Thus he presented the singular spectacle of a President who, in the midst of a great civil war, with unprecedented duties weighing upon him, was constantly in person debating the great features of his policy with the people.

While in this manner he exercised an ever-increasing influence upon the popular understanding, his sympathetic nature endeared him more and more to the popular heart. In vain did journals and

speakers of the opposition represent him as a light-minded trifler, who amused himself with frivolous story-telling and coarse jokes, while the blood of the people was flowing in streams. The people knew that the man at the head of affairs, on whose haggard face the twinkle of humor so frequently changed into an expression of profoundest sadness, was more than any other deeply distressed by the suffering he witnessed; that he felt the pain of every wound that was inflicted on the battlefield, and the anguish of every woman or child who had lost husband or father; that whenever he could he was eager to alleviate sorrow, and that his mercy was never implored in vain. They looked to him as one who was with them and of them in all their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, — who laughed with them and wept with them; and as his heart was theirs, so their hearts turned to him. His popularity was far different from that of Washington, who was revered with awe, or that of Jackson, the unconquerable hero, for whom party enthusiasm never grew weary of shouting. To Abraham Lincoln the people became bound by a genuine sentimental attachment. It was not a matter of respect, or confidence, or party pride, for this feeling spread far beyond the boundary lines of his party; it was

an affair of the heart, independent of mere reasoning. When the soldiers in the field or their folks at home spoke of "Father Abraham," there was no cant in it. They felt that their President was really caring for them as a father would, and that they could go to him, every one of them, as they would go to a father, and talk to him of what troubled them, sure to find a willing ear and tender sympathy. Thus, their President, and his cause, and his endeavors, and his success gradually became to them almost matters of family concern. And this popularity carried him triumphantly through the presidential election of 1864, in spite of an opposition within his own party which at first seemed very formidable.

Many of the radical anti-slavery men were never quite satisfied with Lincoln's ways of meeting the problems of the time. They were very earnest and mostly very able men, who had positive ideas as to "how this rebellion should be put down." They would not recognize the necessity of measuring the steps of the government according to the progress of opinion among the plain people. They criticised Lincoln's cautious management as irresolute, halting, lacking in definite purpose and in energy; he should not have delayed emancipation so long; he

should not have confided important commands to men of doubtful views as to slavery; he should have authorized military commanders to set the slaves free as they went on; he dealt too leniently with unsuccessful generals; he should have put down all factious opposition with a strong hand instead of trying to pacify it; he should have given the people accomplished facts instead of arguing with them, and so on. It is true, these criticisms were not always entirely unfounded. Lincoln's policy had, with the virtues of democratic government, some of its weaknesses, which in the presence of pressing exigencies were apt to deprive governmental action of the necessary vigor; and his kindness of heart, his disposition always to respect the feelings of others, frequently made him recoil from anything like severity, even when severity was urgently called for. But many of his radical critics have since then revised their judgment sufficiently to admit that Lincoln's policy was, on the whole, the wisest and safest; that a policy of heroic methods, while it has sometimes accomplished great results, could in a democracy like ours be maintained only by constant success; that it would have quickly broken down under the weight of disaster; that it might have been successful from the start, had the Union,

at the beginning of the conflict, had its Grants and Shermans and Sheridans, its Farraguts and Porters, fully matured at the head of its forces; but that, as the great commanders had to be evolved slowly from the developments of the war, constant success could not be counted upon, and it was best to follow a policy which was in friendly contact with the popular force, and therefore more fit to stand the trial of misfortune on the battlefield. But at that period they thought differently, and their dissatisfaction with Lincoln's doings was greatly increased by the steps he took toward the reconstruction of rebel States then partially in possession of the Union forces.

In December, 1863, Lincoln issued an amnesty proclamation, offering pardon to all implicated in the rebellion, with certain specified exceptions, on condition of their taking and maintaining an oath to support the Constitution and obey the laws of the United States and the proclamations of the President with regard to slaves; and also promising that when, in any of the rebel States, a number of citizens equal to one tenth of the voters in 1860 should reëstablish a state government in conformity with the oath above mentioned, such should be recognized by the Executive as the true govern-

ment of the State. The proclamation seemed at first to be received with general favor. But soon another scheme of reconstruction, much more stringent in its provisions, was put forward in the House of Representatives by Henry Winter Davis. Benjamin Wade championed it in the Senate. It passed in the closing moments of the session in July, 1864, and Lincoln, instead of making it a law by his signature, embodied the text of it in a proclamation as a plan of reconstruction worthy of being earnestly considered. The differences of opinion concerning this subject had only intensified the feeling against Lincoln which had long been nursed among the radicals, and some of them openly declared their purpose of resisting his reëlection to the presidency. Similar sentiments were manifested by the advanced anti-slavery men of Missouri, who, in their hot faction-fight with the "conservatives" of that State, had not received from Lincoln the active support they demanded. Still another class of Union men, mainly in the East, gravely shook their heads when considering the question whether Lincoln should be reëlected. They were those who cherished in their minds an ideal of statesmanship and of personal bearing in high office with which, in their opinion, Lincoln's individuality was much out of accord.

They were shocked when they heard him cap an argument upon grave affairs of state with a story about "a man out in Sangamon County,"—a story, to be sure, strikingly clinching his point, but sadly lacking in dignity. They could not understand the man who was capable, in opening a cabinet meeting, of reading to his secretaries a funny chapter from a recent book of Artemus Ward, with which in an unoccupied moment he had relieved his care-burdened mind, and who then solemnly informed the executive council that he had vowed in his heart to issue a proclamation emancipating the slaves as soon as God blessed the Union arms with another victory. They were alarmed at the weakness of a President who would indeed resist the urgent remonstrances of statesmen against his policy, but could not resist the prayer of an old woman for the pardon of a soldier who was sentenced to be shot for desertion. Such men, mostly sincere and ardent patriots, not only wished, but earnestly set to work, to prevent Lincoln's renomination. Not a few of them actually believed, in 1863, that, if the national convention of the Union party were held then, Lincoln would not be supported by the delegation of a single State. But when the convention met at Baltimore, in June, 1864, the voice of

the people was heard. On the first ballot Lincoln received the votes of the delegations from all the States except Missouri; and even the Missourians turned over their votes to him before the result of the ballot was declared.

But even after his renomination, the opposition to Lincoln within the ranks of the Union party did not subside. A convention, called by the dissatisfied radicals in Missouri, and favored by men of a similar way of thinking in other States, had been held already in May, and had nominated as its candidate for the presidency General Frémont. He, indeed, did not attract a strong following, but opposition movements from different quarters appeared more formidable. Henry Winter Davis and Benjamin Wade assailed Lincoln in a flaming manifesto. Other Union men, of undoubted patriotism and high standing, persuaded themselves, and sought to persuade the people, that Lincoln's renomination was ill advised and dangerous to the Union cause. As the Democrats had put off their convention until the 29th of August, the Union party had, during the larger part of the summer, no opposing candidate and platform to attack, and the political campaign languished. Neither were the tidings from the theatre of war of a cheering character. The ter-

rible losses suffered by Grant's army in the battles of the Wilderness spread general gloom. Sherman seemed for a while to be in a precarious position before Atlanta. The opposition to Lincoln within the Union party grew louder in its complaints and discouraging predictions. Earnest demands were heard that his candidacy should be withdrawn. Lincoln himself, not knowing how strongly the masses were attached to him, was haunted by dark forebodings of defeat. Then the scene suddenly changed as if by magic. The Democrats, in their national convention, declared the war a failure, demanded, substantially, peace at any price, and nominated on such a platform General McClellan as their candidate. Their convention had hardly adjourned when the capture of Atlanta gave a new aspect to the military situation. It was like a sun-ray bursting through a dark cloud. The rank and file of the Union party rose with rapidly growing enthusiasm. The song "We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand strong," resounded all over the land. Long before the decisive day arrived, the result was beyond doubt, and Lincoln was reëlected President by overwhelming majorities. The election over, even his severest critics found themselves forced to admit that Lincoln was the only possi-

ble candidate for the Union party in 1864, and that neither political combinations nor campaign speeches, nor even victories in the field, were needed to insure his success. The plain people had all the while been satisfied with Abraham Lincoln: they confided in him; they loved him; they felt themselves near to him; they saw personified in him the cause of Union and freedom; and they went to the ballot-box for him in their strength.

The hour of triumph called out the characteristic impulses of his nature. The opposition within the Union party had stung him to the quick. Now he had his opponents before him, baffled and humiliated. Not a moment did he lose to stretch out the hand of friendship to all. "Now that the election is over," he said, in response to a serenade, "may not all, having a common interest, reunite in a common effort to save our common country? For my own part, I have striven, and will strive, to place no obstacle in the way. So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom. While I am deeply sensible to the high compliment of a reëlection, it adds nothing to my satisfaction that any other man may be pained or disappointed by the result. May I ask those who were with me to join with me in the same spirit

*Lincoln and his Son "Tad"*

toward those who were against me?" This was Abraham Lincoln's character as tested in the furnace of prosperity.

The war was virtually decided, but not yet ended. Sherman was irresistibly carrying the Union flag through the South. Grant had his iron hand upon the ramparts of Richmond. The days of the Confederacy were evidently numbered. Only the last blow remained to be struck. Then Lincoln's second inauguration came, and with it his second inaugural address. Lincoln's famous "Gettysburg speech" has been much and justly admired. But far greater, as well as far more characteristic, was that inaugural in which he poured out the whole devotion and tenderness of his great soul. It had all the solemnity of a father's last admonition and blessing to his children before he lay down to die. These were its closing words: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of

the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

This was like a sacred poem. No American President had ever spoken words like these to the American people. America never had a President who found such words in the depth of his heart.

Now followed the closing scenes of the war. The Southern armies fought bravely to the last, but all in vain. Richmond fell. Lincoln himself entered the city on foot, accompanied only by a few officers and a squad of sailors who had rowed him ashore from the flotilla in the James River, a negro picked up on the way serving as a guide. Never had the world seen a more modest conqueror and a more characteristic triumphal procession,—no army with banners and drums, only a throng of those who had been slaves, hastily run together, escorting the victorious chief into the capital of the vanquished foe. We are told that they pressed around him, kissed

his hands and his garments, and shouted and danced for joy, while tears ran down the President's care-furrowed cheeks.

A few days more brought the surrender of Lee's army, and peace was assured. The people of the North were wild with joy. Everywhere festive guns were booming, bells pealing, the churches ringing with thanksgivings, and jubilant multitudes thronging the thoroughfares, when suddenly the news flashed over the land that Abraham Lincoln had been murdered. The people were stunned by the blow. Then a wail of sorrow went up such as America had never heard before. Thousands of Northern households grieved as if they had lost their dearest member. Many a Southern man cried out in his heart that his people had been robbed of their best friend in their humiliation and distress, when Abraham Lincoln was struck down. It was as if the tender affection which his countrymen bore him had inspired all nations with a common sentiment. All civilized mankind stood mourning around the coffin of the dead President. Many of those, here and abroad, who not long before had ridiculed and reviled him were among the first to hasten on with their flowers of eulogy, and in that universal chorus of lamentation and praise there was not a voice that did not

tremble with genuine emotion. Never since Washington's death had there been such unanimity of judgment as to a man's virtues and greatness; and even Washington's death, although his name was held in greater reverence, did not touch so sympathetic a chord in the people's hearts.

Nor can it be said that this was owing to the tragic character of Lincoln's end. It is true, the death of this gentlest and most merciful of rulers by the hand of a mad fanatic was well apt to exalt him beyond his merits in the estimation of those who loved him, and to make his renown the object of peculiarly tender solicitude. But it is also true that the verdict pronounced upon him in those days has been affected little by time, and that historical inquiry has served rather to increase than to lessen the appreciation of his virtues, his abilities, his services. Giving the fullest measure of credit to his great ministers, — to Seward for his conduct of foreign affairs, to Chase for the management of the finances under terrible difficulties, to Stanton for the performance of his tremendous task as war secretary, —and readily acknowledging that without the skill and fortitude of the great commanders, and the heroism of the soldiers and sailors under them, success could not have been achieved, the historian

still finds that Lincoln's judgment and will were by no means governed by those around him; that the most important steps were owing to his initiative; that his was the deciding and directing mind; and that it was preëminently he whose sagacity and whose character enlisted for the administration in its struggles the countenance, the sympathy, and the support of the people. It is found, even, that his judgment on military matters was astonishingly acute, and that the advice and instructions he gave to the generals commanding in the field would not seldom have done honor to the ablest of them. History, therefore, without overlooking or palliating or excusing any of his shortcomings or mistakes, continues to place him foremost among the saviours of the Union and the liberators of the slave. More than that, it awards to him the merit of having accomplished what but few political philosophers would have recognized as possible,—of leading the republic through four years of furious civil conflict without any serious detriment to its free institutions.

He was, indeed, while President, violently denounced by the opposition as a tyrant and a usurper, for having gone beyond his constitutional powers in authorizing or permitting the temporary suppres-

sion of newspapers, and in wantonly suspending the writ of habeas corpus and resorting to arbitrary arrests. Nobody should be blamed who, when such things are done, in good faith and from patriotic motives protests against them. In a republic, arbitrary stretches of power, even when demanded by necessity, should never be permitted to pass without a protest on the one hand, and without an apology on the other. It is well they did not so pass during our civil war. That arbitrary measures were resorted to, is true. That they were resorted to most sparingly, and only when the government thought them absolutely required by the safety of the republic, will now hardly be denied. But certain it is that the history of the world does not furnish a single example of a government passing through so tremendous a crisis as our civil war was with so small a record of arbitrary acts, and so little interference with the ordinary course of law outside the field of military operations. No American President ever wielded such power as that which was thrust into Lincoln's hands. It is to be hoped that no American President ever will have to be intrusted with such power again. But no man was ever intrusted with it to whom its seductions were less dangerous than they proved to be to Abraham

*Lincoln in 1865*

Lincoln. With scrupulous care he endeavored, even under the most trying circumstances, to remain strictly within the constitutional limitations of his authority; and whenever the boundary became indistinct, or when the dangers of the situation forced him to cross it, he was equally careful to mark his acts as exceptional measures, justifiable only by the imperative necessities of the civil war, so that they might not pass into history as precedents for similar acts in time of peace. It is an unquestionable fact that during the reconstruction period which followed the war, more things were done capable of serving as dangerous precedents than during the war itself. Thus it may truly be said of him not only that under his guidance the republic was saved from disruption and the country was purified of the blot of slavery, but that, during the stormiest and most perilous crisis in our history, he so conducted the government and so wielded his almost dictatorial power as to leave essentially intact our free institutions in all things that concern the rights and liberties of the citizen. He understood well the nature of the problem. In his first message to Congress he defined it in admirably pointed language: "Must a government be of necessity too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too

weak to maintain its own existence? Is there in all republics this inherent weakness?" This question he answered in the name of the great American republic, as no man could have answered it better, with a triumphant "No."

It has been said that Abraham Lincoln died at the right moment for his fame. However that may be, he had, at the time of his death, certainly not exhausted his usefulness to his country. He was probably the only man who could have guided the nation through the perplexities of the reconstruction period in such a manner as to prevent in the work of peace the revival of the passions of the war. He would indeed not have escaped serious controversy as to details of policy; but he could have weathered it far better than any other statesman of his time, for his prestige with the active politicians had been immensely strengthened by his triumphant reëlection; and what is more important, he would have been supported by the confidence of the victorious Northern people that he would do all to secure the safety of the Union and the rights of the emancipated negro, and at the same time by the confidence of the defeated Southern people that nothing would be done by him from motives of vindictiveness, or of unreasonable fanaticism, or

of a selfish party spirit. "With malice toward none, with charity for all," the foremost of the victors would have personified in himself the genius of reconciliation.

He might have rendered the country a great service in another direction. A few days after the fall of Richmond, he pointed out to a friend the crowd of office-seekers besieging his door. "Look at that," said he. "Now we have conquered the rebellion, but here you see something that may become more dangerous to this republic than the rebellion itself." It is true, Lincoln as President did not profess what we now call civil service reform principles. He used the patronage of the government in many cases avowedly to reward party work, in many others to form combinations and to produce political effects advantageous to the Union cause, and in still others simply to put the right man into the right place. But in his endeavors to strengthen the Union cause, and in his search for able and useful men for public duties, he frequently went beyond the limits of his party, and gradually accustomed himself to the thought that, while party service had its value, considerations of the public interest were, as to appointments to office, of far greater consequence. Moreover, there had been such a mingling of different

political elements in support of the Union during the civil war that Lincoln, standing at the head of that temporarily united motley mass, hardly felt himself, in the narrow sense of the term, a party man. And as he became strongly impressed with the dangers brought upon the republic by the use of public offices as party spoils, it is by no means improbable that, had he survived the all-absorbing crisis and found time to turn to other objects, one of the most important reforms of later days would have been pioneered by his powerful authority. This was not to be. But the measure of his achievements was full enough for immortality.

To the younger generation Abraham Lincoln has already become a half-mythical figure, which, in the haze of historic distance, grows to more and more heroic proportions, but also loses in distinctness of outline and feature. This is indeed the common lot of popular heroes; but the Lincoln legend will be more than ordinarily apt to become fanciful, as his individuality, assembling seemingly incongruous qualities and forces in a character at the same time grand and most lovable, was so unique, and his career so abounding in startling contrasts. As the state of society in which Abraham

Lincoln grew up passes away, the world will read with increasing wonder of the man who, not only of the humblest origin, but remaining the simplest and most unpretending of citizens, was raised to a position of power unprecedented in our history; who was the gentlest and most peace-loving of mortals, unable to see any creature suffer without a pang in his own breast, and suddenly found himself called to conduct the greatest and bloodiest of our wars; who wielded the power of government when stern resolution and relentless force were the order of the day, and then won and ruled the popular mind and heart by the tender sympathies of his nature; who was a cautious conservative by temperament and mental habit, and led the most sudden and sweeping social revolution of our time; who, preserving his homely speech and rustic manner even in the most conspicuous position of that period, drew upon himself the scoffs of polite society, and then thrilled the soul of mankind with utterances of wonderful beauty and grandeur; who, in his heart the best friend of the defeated South, was murdered because a crazy fanatic took him for its most cruel enemy; who, while in power, was beyond measure lampooned and maligned

by sectional passion and an excited party spirit, and around whose bier friend and foe gathered to praise him — which they have since never ceased to do — as one of the greatest of Americans and the best of men.

CARL SCHURZ.